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Anniversary Bumper Issue

# Phoenix

JOURNAL ON MUSIC & DANCE

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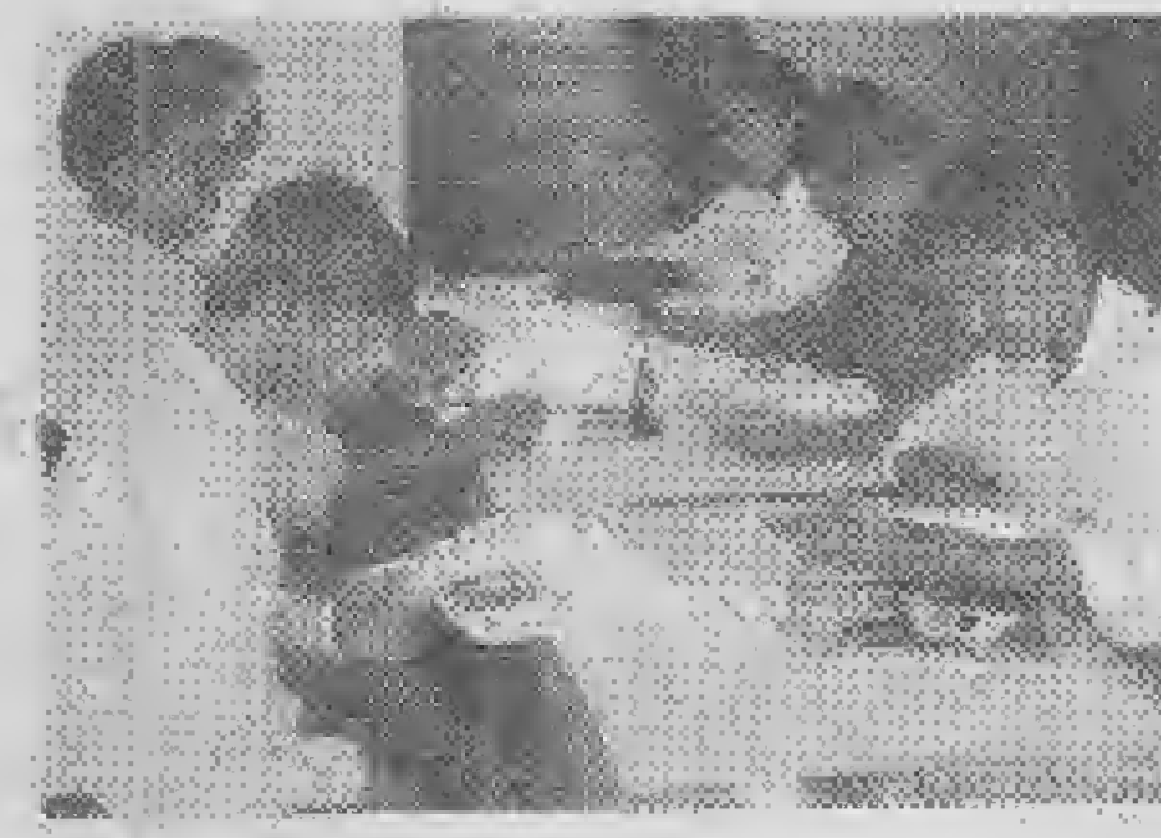
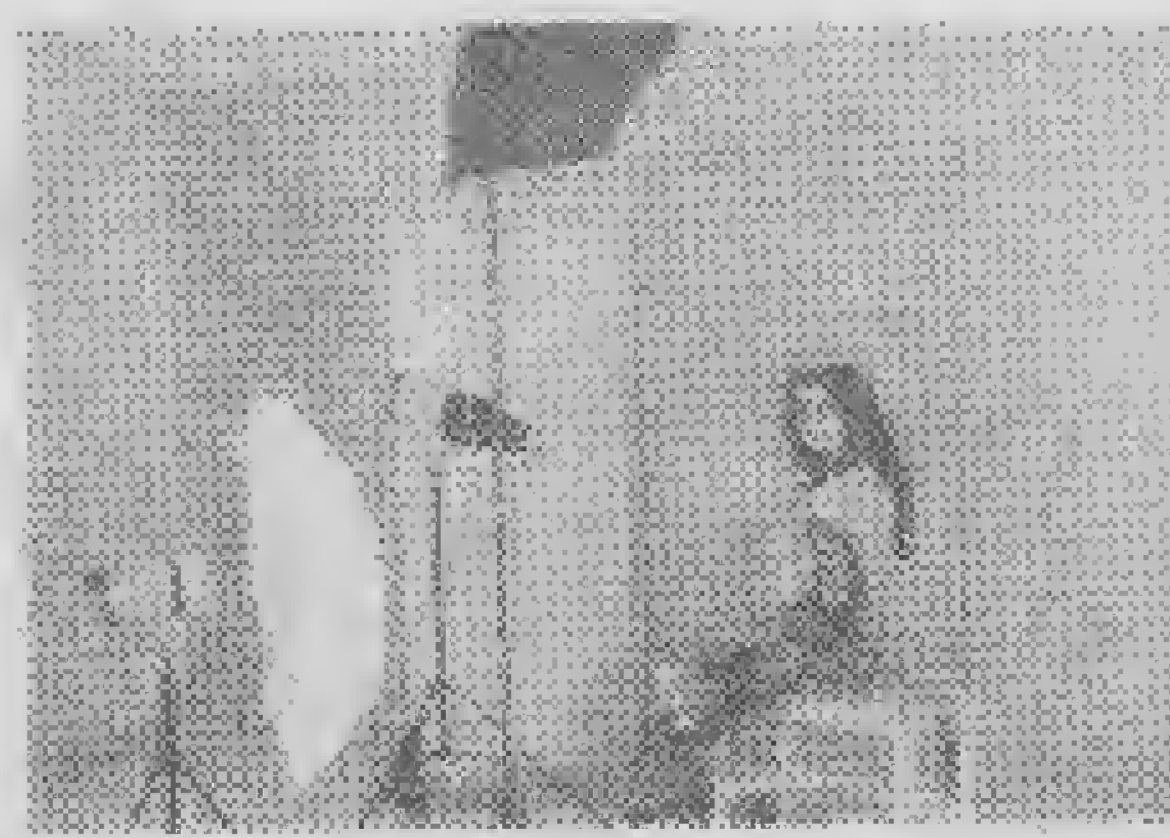
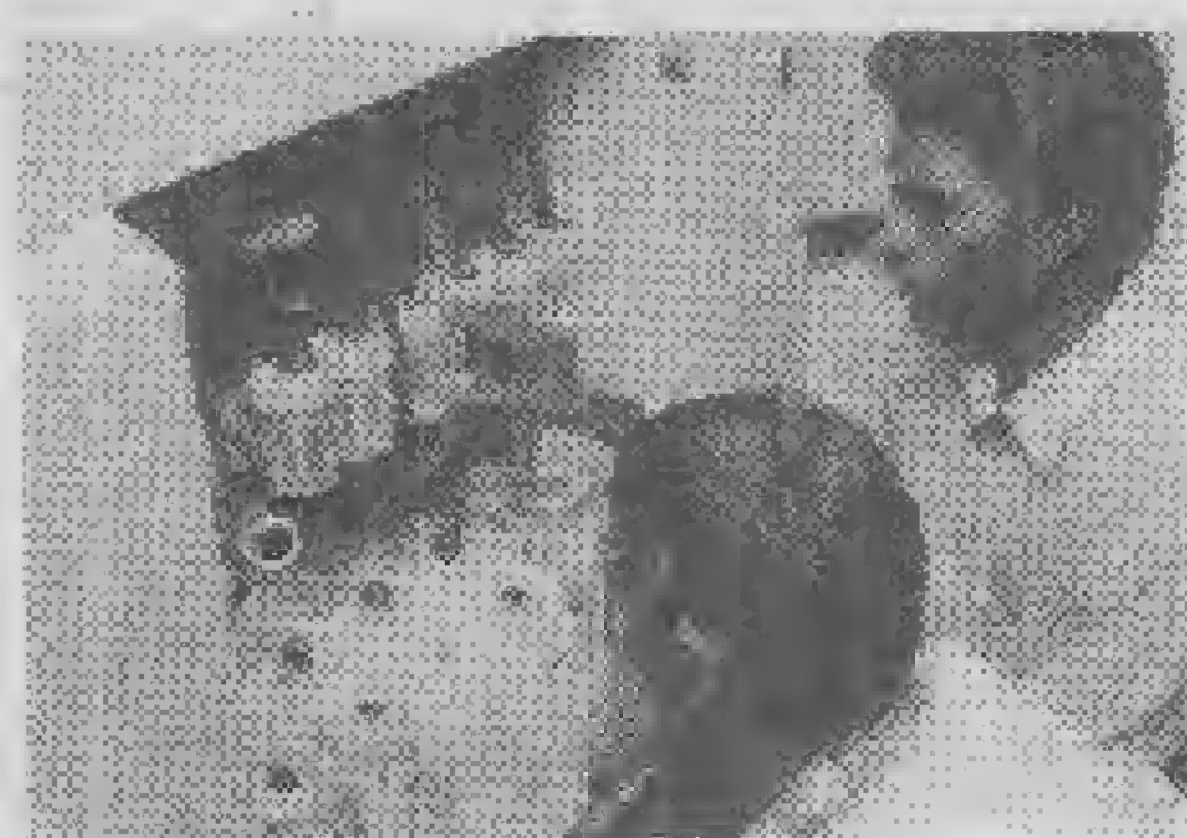
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# PHOENIX

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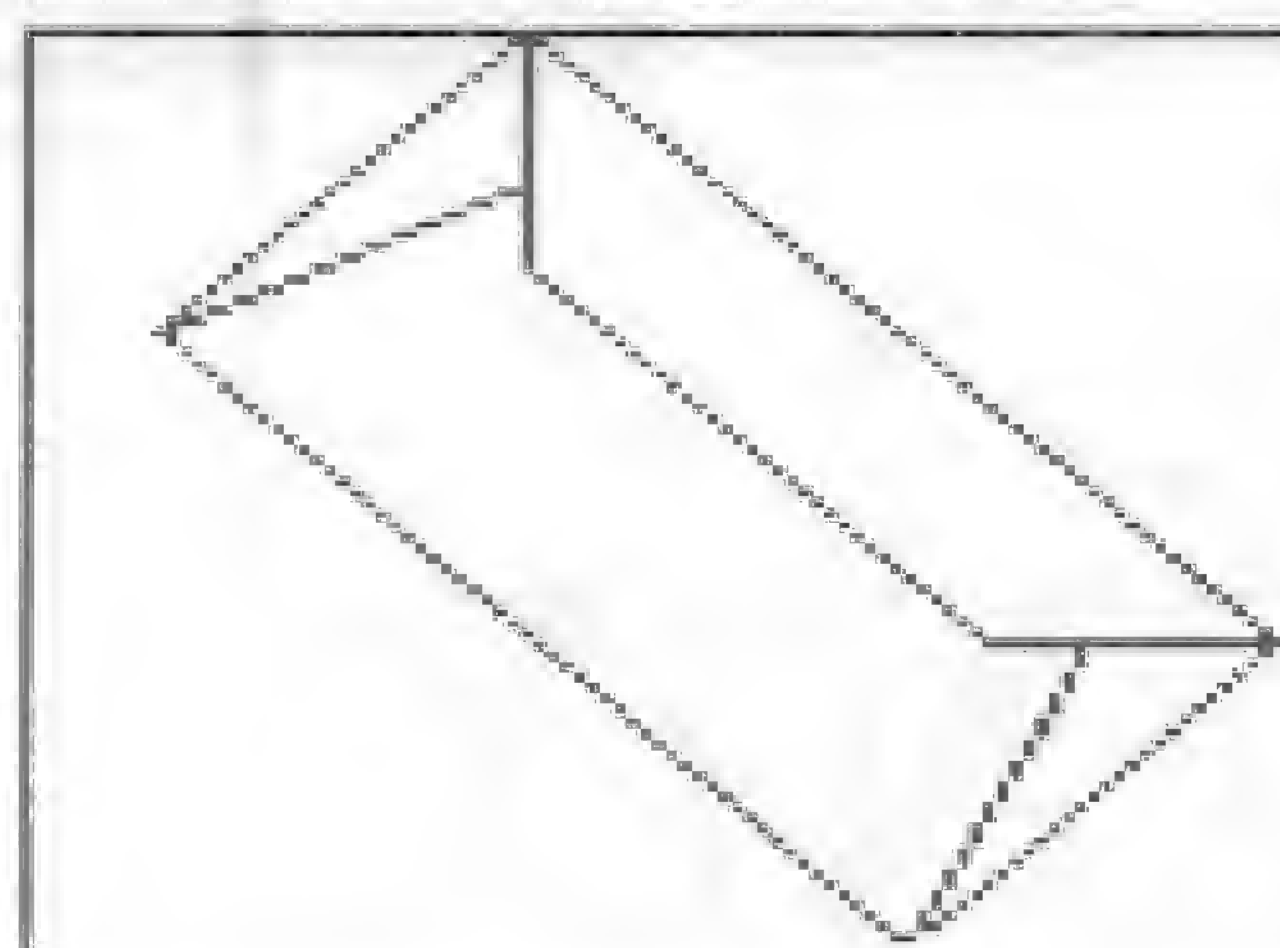
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# READERS Write

## Self Audition

PHOENIX is fine and fascinating to look at and enjoy reading every page. The cover page is so fine and superb, credit should go to N. Sundar Raj. It might have taken lot of time to beautify the cover pages.

The Associate Editor, Bangalore K. Venkatram is both a reputed musicologist and a great name in music-percussion, besides being a good writer in English and compliments to S.N. Chandrasekhar for his fine editorials.

Your editorial 'Self Audition' (June 96) raised the all - important issue very succinctly. What some of us were hesitating to write about has been done by you. It deserves urgent action by the authorities, how so ever delicate the position may be.

In fact what is true of AIR is true of DD also. Probably the AIR and DD broadcast classical music programmes late in the night deliberately to avoid criticism as very few will listen at that time.

More such write ups regularly may wake up the slumbering bosses and big wigs and make them act.

*Anantharam, Bangalore.*

## Glory of Indian Music

I commend M.C. Narasaraju of Chirala for his article, 'The Glory of Indian Music'. The art of music is the heart of Indian culture. Saint Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Shama Sastry, Tansen and Baiju Bawra are some of the most brilliant stars of the first magnitude in the large sky of Indian music.

Valmiki has sung Ramayana. Vyasa has tuned the melodies of Mahabharata. Jayadeva's Geetha Govinda is immortal and unique. Mali's flute takes us back to Krishna's flute melodies in Brindavan.

The melody of mandolin Srinivas, the fingering technique of Veena Doreswamy Iyengar and that of Kadri Gopalnath on Saxophone and some of the modern techniques displayed in playing clarinet, flute and veena show what a large scope there is to delineate ragas and reach their depths.

This in itself is a testimony to the glory of Indian Music.

The annual subscription of Phoenix, Rs 50-00 is so low that every one may desire to subscribe to the journal.

Sponsors like Somnath, Kulkarni, Rama Rao and V. Krishnan deserve every commendation and this would maintain the dignity and respect of the esteemed journal.

Some contemporary geniuses have been over looked and they have been forgotten in the history of music.

Mention may be made of Swara simha Kuthi Anantha Sastry of Bangalore, Pranavanada Kalabhi-chakshana B.R. Govindaswamy of Chikballapur who was appearing in most of the concerts of Chittoor Subramanya Pillai and other renowned musicians of Bangalore.

The prestige of Phoenix will be heightened if columns are set apart to highlight such geniuses.

*H.N. Rajanna, Bhadravathi.*

## Noble Cause

It is nice to note that you are working for a noble cause by bringing

out a beautiful journal on dance and music. The coverage and articles are entertaining, educative and depicting our culture. The name 'PHOENIX' has suited very well as it 'speaks' the language of dance and music.

*Mahanthi Venkateswara Rao  
Visakha Dance Academy  
Visakhapatnam*

## Music Conference Concerts

Opinions may differ on the quality of each of the main evening concerts recently concluded at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. But it is unanimous that the vocal concert of S. Shankar was extremely satisfying, sumptuous and as a katcheri should be. He has silenced the organisers, who lean only towards "foreign artists", and has proved many points over them including attracting a sizeable audience. This concert should give a phillip to more Karnataka musicians.

*Anantharam  
Bangalore*

## A Clarification

Anantharam in his letter (July, Aug 96) has made a note that some organisations fill in the programmes with artistes from outside Karnataka and pointing out Odakathur Mutt as one wherein all the fourteen programmes were studied with outside artistes.

We wish to clarify that, as at Odakathur Mutt our "Jothi Manram Hall" was given to Sri Guruvayur appan Bhajan Samaj who conducted the above said programmes for their 19th Year Gokulashtami Celebrations and not Odakathur Mutt.

*Secretary  
Odakathur Swamigal Mutt  
Bangalore*



## Marching Ahead

# Editorial

With the present issue, a bumper, PHOENIX enters its second year. The year that has gone by has been eventful to the nascent journal and its handful of promoters in more ways than one. Though fraught with trepidation it was launched amidst fanfare, thanks to the hospitality of friends in the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. Since then the editors have spared no efforts to see that the journal serves the cause to the best of their ability. It is gratifying that almost everyone who peruses its pages has a good word about its editorial quality, usefulness and low price. But the editors are by no means complacent. A wider variety, interests and range are the journal's objectives. They can be achieved if more and more youngsters come forward to write for it. That will also pave the way for the blossoming of serious art criticism for the future. But the editors are aware that it is not easy to persuade youngsters to the task.

The journal has been received well, there is no doubt. But financially, it is very much in the red. Subscriptions are trickling, but the proceeds on that count can hardly meet the cost of production. And that is all that is needed to keep the show on, as all other services including the outlay on photographs and DTP are not charged. What has kept the hopes of the promoters high is the unsolicited sponsorship of some issues. These sponsors were magnanimous in their offers, which in many cases for sure is not a one time offer! In the absence of substantial Ads these voluntary sponsorships have been an impetus to the promoters. PHOENIX hopes there would be more sponsors in the years to come.

The readers would have seen that the issues are almost regular. If the copies have not reached the subscribers on time, it is as much due to postal vagaries as the yet to be fixed logistics involved in the production. However, ample care is being taken to see that the schedule is not upset at any cost.

But the one department where the promoters have had to face a total blank is advertisement. The journal's PR has utterly failed to tap the goodwill properly. All it can do at this juncture is to appeal to institutions and commercial houses connected with or interested in the twin arts to use its pages for their publicity. Appeals to this effect are being made from time to time through the pages of the journal. But the response, alas, has not been encouraging. If some such promotion is forthcoming and with the goodwill it has already been enjoining, PHOENIX is sure to march ahead.

*S.N. Chandrasekhar*





# Calling AIR

S.N.Chandrasekhar

**D**ivyanama Sankeertana of Thyagaraja, a series that is being broadcast by the Chennai station of AIR has turned out to be so absorbing, so elevating that for sure it should have become a 'must' for lovers of music. Rightly so, as it has been planned and executed by two well-known musical personalities in T.S. Parthasarathy and Balamurali Krishna. Among the singers could be found quite a few familiar voices, singly and severally.

By the time of going to the Press, as many as 14 programmes have been through, though one is not sure how many more are to follow! Even so, the half an hour slot every Tuesday at 9-30 pm which is relayed from the local station as well is worth sacrificing all other priorities in the day to listen to.

The slot itself is at the expense of a time-honoured National Programme of Talks. Which should give an idea of its importance. And if many listeners have missed it, it is worthwhile approaching the authorities for rebroadcast.

Equally rewarding was a programme on Ashtapadis. The credit for that again should go to the Chennai station. Produced by S. Janakiraman (Sep 4, 8-30 am) it was imaginatively conceived, attributing the Nayika to each of the gems of Jayadeva Which could be of particular interest to dancers. An experienced team of vocalists like Madurai G.S. Mani, P.S. Narayanaswamy, Prema Hariharan and Bushan K. Kalyanaraman was in charge of the rendition which was noted for its meaningful diction. The raga in each case complemented the rasa underlying the composition.

In the routine listening post, the



*Sithalakshmi Venkateshan*

top place should be given to veteran Thitte Krishna Iyengar (Sep 6, 8-30 am). Flanked by M.Nagaraj on the violin and Ravishankar on mridangam, the nonagenarian's rendition of Ragamalika was so impressive and so impactful that age for sure has not



*M.S.Govindaswamy*

withered his spirits. Indeed, he is still relevant!

The Anandabhairavi piece gave Sithalakshmi Venkateshan a steady start later at 9-15 am. But the alap for Janjhooti was not on as solid a ground. Nor did the piece Palisemma build up confidence in the senior artiste. Geeta Shamprakash's veena recital (Sep 7, 8-30 am) took off on a bright note. Her alap for Thodi stood out for its clarity, the easy - paced Thanam helping her to lend a well-reasoned imagery to the raga. The kriti Meenalochane had a lively gait to rise the level of the concert. Shaila Subramanyam's Pantuvarali piece Saramegan at 9-30 was as enduring, though a few slips in 'swarasthana' were disconcerting.

The National programmed of Dinanath Mishra (Hindustani vocal) the same night could hardly measure above the pales of mediocrity. True, he has a pleasant voice, but its range is limited as could be made out from the initial Puriya-Dhanashri. The alap fell short in its tonal felicity. Bageshri was a shade better, the tilt in the 'layakari' heightening its aural charm.

The Jalatarang recital of Venugopal (Sep 10, 8-30 am) started with an Eshamanohari piece in style. A composition of B. Devendrappa, it bristled the alap and Thanam in Dharmavati, rendered with mix-up trills in the 'kalpanaswaras'. However, as it happens, an unfamiliar kriti (Pavanatmaja?) was the undoing in the instrumental recital. Mysore Nagaraj's violin accompaniment provided enjoyable moments.

Nadathanumanisham and Nidhi Chala (Kalyani) by T.D. Alavandar (9-30 am) bristled in the familiar





Padma Gurudutt

Madurai Mani's intonation. But it could do proud to neither. Pushpa Kashinath on Veena (1-30 pm) revealed competent instrumental command in Bantureeti (Hamsanada).

The violin solo of M.S. Govindaswamy (Sep 11, 8-30 am) was notable for its tonal quality. Gajananayuthham (Chakravaka, termed Vegavahini by Dikshitar) stood out for its raga 'bhava'. The broadcast was neatly balanced with M.A. Krishnamurthy's mridangam support.

At 9-30 am Rukmini Srivatsan's



Neela Ramgopal

Saveri (Sri Rajagopala) as also a mridangam solo by S.S. Anandaram had their lively spell. The inevitable cut-cut due to high-power transmission failure took its toll, but the usual regret announcement was conspicuously absent. It is strange that despite the rapid advancement of technology, the AIR has no standby for such contingencies. It is high time that the matter receives attention.

Padma Narayan's Sadbhaktiyu (Poochi Iyengar), was tuneful, a crisp 'chitteswara' adding to its lively gait. The veena recital of S. Rajalakshmi of Mysore (9-30) was delectable. Kambodi was the main raga, exemplified in Lambodaramavalamba. It is a pity that the Tamboora drone was inaudible. The accompanying morching need not have gone on non-stop from beginning to end. It did not help enlivening the laya. Tumkur Ravishankar on the mridangam was especially consistent.

Usha Ramamurthy's Manonmani (Shubhapantuvarali) of Muthiah Bhagavatar on Gottuvadya (Sep 12, 9-15 am) was passable. Nor was there much to write about Evarura (Mohana) that followed. V. Desikachar's flute (Sep 13, 8-30 am) was melodious, Sarasadala-nayane 'raga bhava'. Uma Gopalaswamy (9-15 am) chose Pantuvarali for elaboration, for Ramanatham of Dikshitar. It was pleasant. The study of Dhanyasi by T.S. Rama (10 pm) which included a facile alapana by K.V. Narayanaswamy was quite informative.

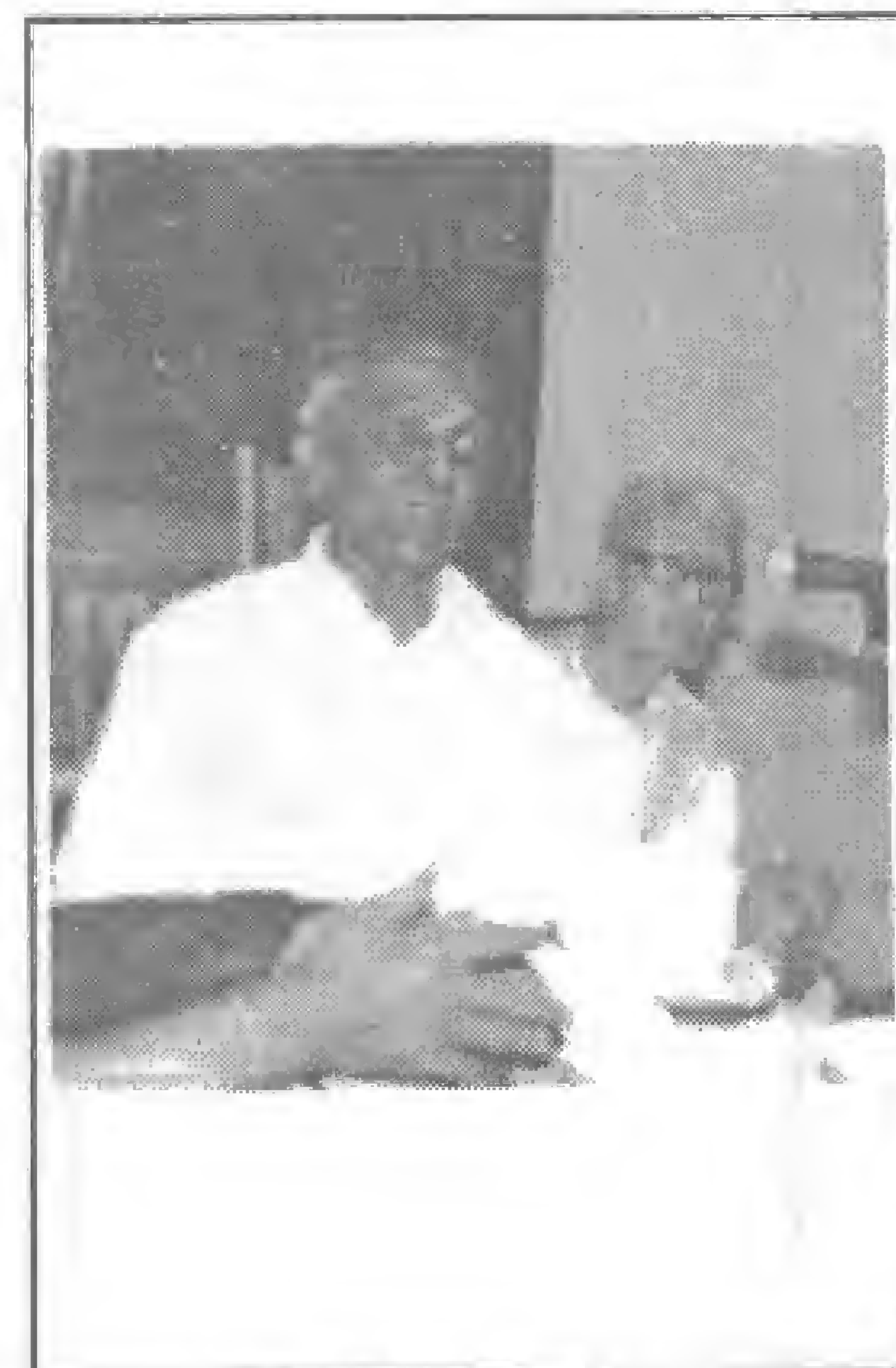
Radhika Rajanarayan's veena recital (Sep 14, 8-30 am) included an infrequent piece Mayamma Nannu Brovamma (Natakuranji) of Shyama Sastry. It is a pity this lovely piece is not heard often. the Kanada thillana of Lalgudi pulsed with its innate 'raga bhava'. M.Ramesh chose Marubalka (Sriranjini) and Kalyani (Dayamado Ranga) for his vocal (9-30 am). Both the concerts were above average.

Padma Gurudutt (Sep 15, 8-30 am) reeled of some pieces on Devi to



Uma Gopalaswamy

fall in line with the 'Gouri puja'. Neepadame Gati (Nalinakanti) of G.N.B. Parvati Palisemma (Shanmukhapriya) and Pahi Parvati (Arabhi) of Swati Tirunal glowed in their raga 'bhava'. P.S. Vasantha was in the nick (10-10 am) as she intonated Purvikalyani and Hindola. The announcement was Deshadi for the Shyama Sastry kriti (Purvikalyani) proved all wrong. Nor was the Vilamba Chapu gait which was rendered, properly announced, no doubt a lapse on the part of the artiste. The raga-thana-pallavi in Hindola for a trikala, tishra



Thitte Krishna Iyengar

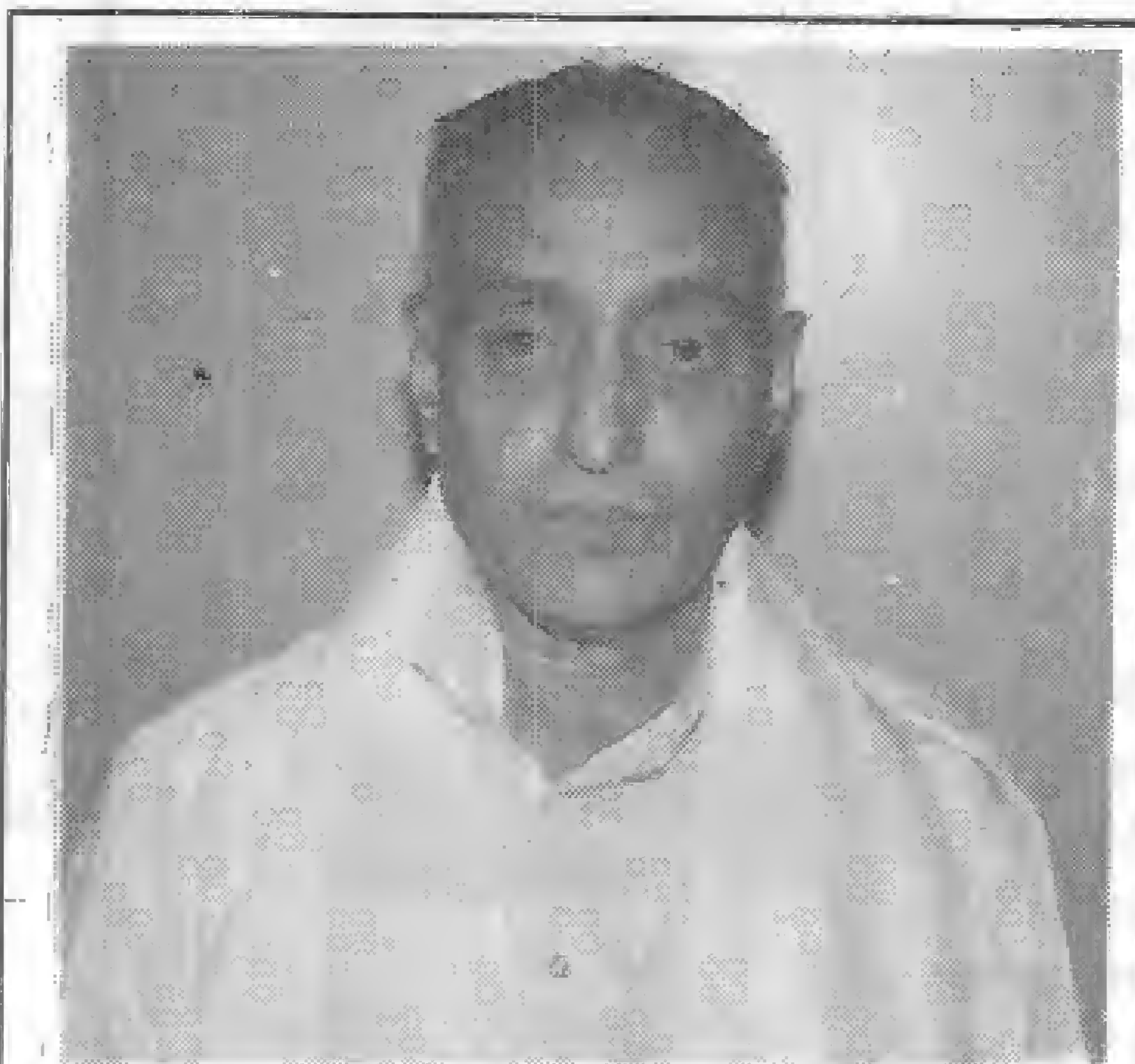




R.R. Keshava Murthy

in khanda jampe was neatly executed, negotiating Bowli, Shahana and Kanada in short spells. The broadcast was disrupted with the usual cut-cut and an intrusion of a Jaltarang for some unknown reason.

The South Zone hook-up (10 pm) featured a delectable veena recital by V. Maheswari with Chellappa of Madurai on mridangam. The Valachi varnam of Lalgudi, Sri Mahaganapatim of Mysore Maharaja (Athana) and Visveswara Rakshamam (Kanada) of Dikshitar were rendered sans alap or swaras. Rara Rajeevalochana (Mohana) of



V. Desikachar

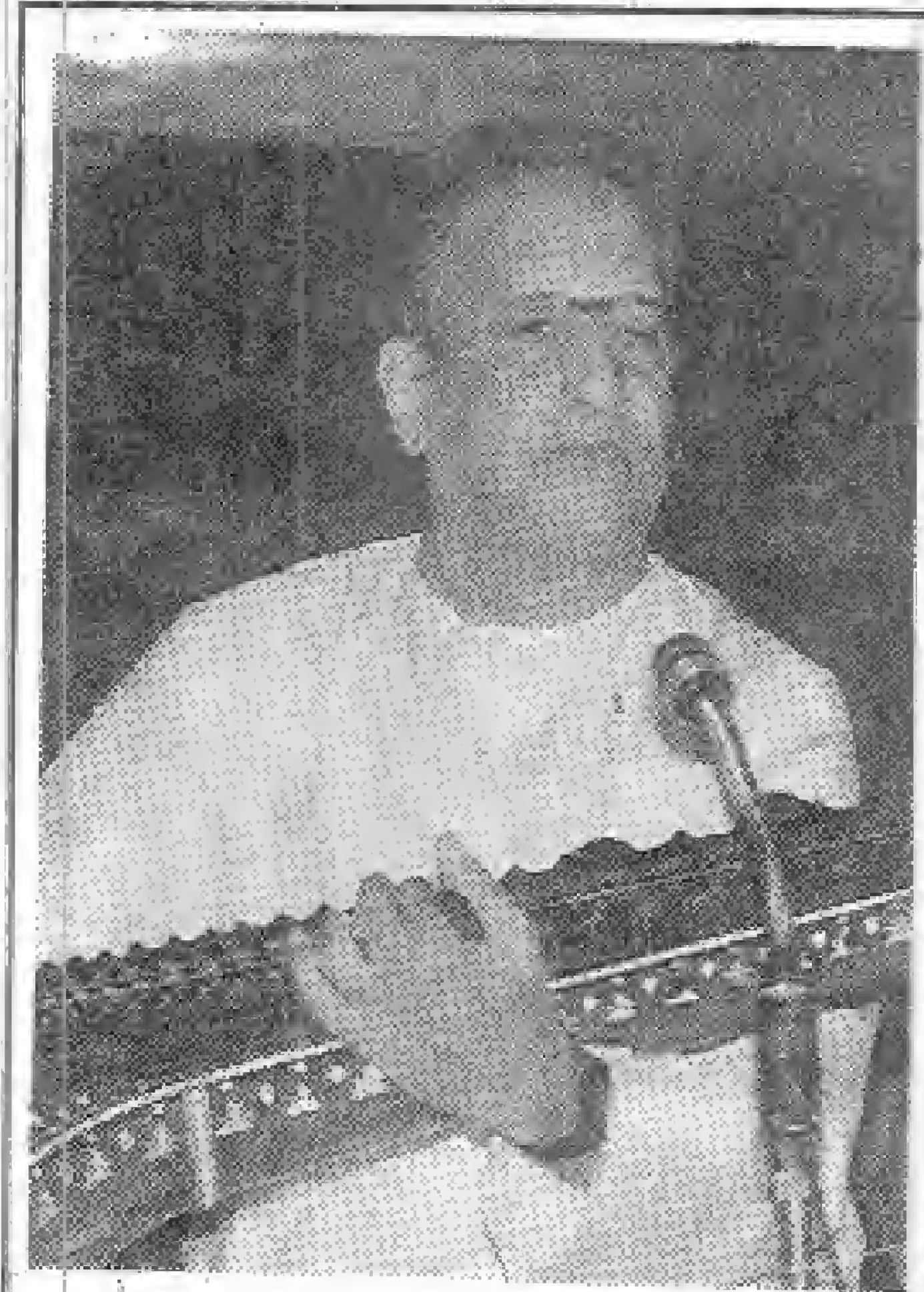
Vasudevachar (announced as Thyagaraja's!) was rendered devoutly with alap and swara 'korvais'. It was a neat, nicely balanced recital.

Neela Ramgopal (Sep 18, 9-30 pm) revelled in a rare Saranga Tarangini. It was an aesthetic treat. The Shahana varna gave Chitra Lingam (Sep 20, 9-15 am) on her veena a tidy start, the following Mohana-Kalyani piece being more pleasing, coaxing as it did the very crux of the soulful melody. The alap for Bindumalini (Enta Muddu) acquired a special delight, the kriti receiving the right dose of swaraprasthara to rise the concert to a lingering mood. Rajakesari on the mridanga was in fine touch.

The National Programme on Sep 21 (9-30) featured a veena recital by R. Visweswaran. Dhenuka (Theliyaleru) gave him a sedate start. But the alap for Kambodi received a reposeful airing, all the endearing facets of the raga combining to heighten its aura. The Pharas piece was a fitting finale to the thoughtful presentation.

Veteran R.R. Keshavamurthy was in, an ebullient mood when he started his violin solo (Sep 25, 8-30 am). Manasa-Manasa, the Vardhini piece fitted ideally into that frame of mind and it was run through with casual disdain. The short alap for Deepak (Kalalanerchi) brought greater restraint in his approach, though the dash was intact. As always, one could only imagine what a treat it would be to listen to this 'sadhaka' if only there was a little more restraint!

Saraswathi Ramachandran (9-30 am) is certainly not a familiar name. She has a mellow voice as found in the rendition of Kanjadalayatakshi. But her alap for Shanmukhapriya (Vadane) betrayed an unsteady 'sruti'. The raga 'bhava' was also



R. Visweshwaran

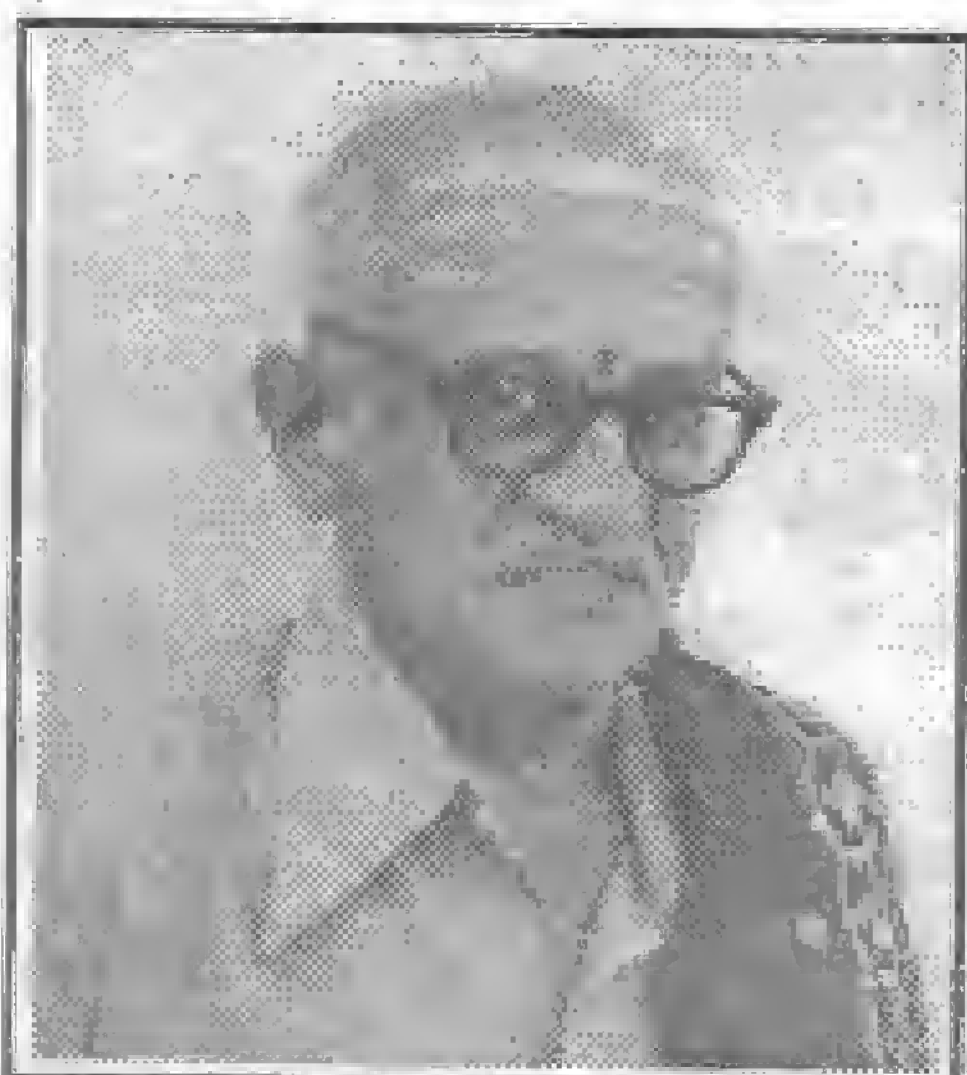
elusive, though the kriti was very much on the traditional track.

The flute recital of K.P. Upadhyaya (Sep 27, 9-30 am) could not account for a good form. True, the Navarasa-kannada piece, something ideal for the flute, revealed a steady blowing technique. The alap for Gourimanohari (Guruleka) also had some lilting moments. But the notes in the upper reaches betrayed a screenc which robbed all the nuances in the area. H.K. Narisimha-murthy's violin accompaniment was a highspot of the fare. But R.A. Rama-mani's refined vocalism stood out in relief in her opening Kannada number Intakante. It was an impressive start, the masterly Thyagaiah piece Ksheenamai (Mukhari) was so tuneful and so full of emotion, that the rendition left an indelible impact. A rewarding recital indeed. ■

#### Attention Organisers

Music and dance institutions are requested to send their programmes to the Editor, PHOENIX, 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009, before the first week of every month.





# Down Memory Lane

Bangalore K Venkatram

**S**everal interesting anecdotes spring to my mind when I recollect my association with Mali. Just as I joined the Indian Telephone Industries in 1957, violin T. Gururajappa had returned from Trichy to join the local AIR.

Gururajappa and myself used to accompany on violin and mridangam in concerts of B.N. Suresh (flute) and others. Once Mali sent word to me for a concert at Erode. While I was hesitant, as I had to attend the office next morning (Monday) at 7-30 am, Mali assured of our return by the Trichy mail scheduled to arrive at around 5-30 am. He persuaded me to accept adding that Gururajappa who was coming for violin, also had a live broadcast at 7-30 am.

As we landed late night (very early morning) at Erode and moving towards the car, some Sabha people requested us to see that the recital was a success. There were apparently two parties in the Sabha opposed to each other and one of them had reported to police about possession of alcohol (it was a prohibited area!) Around 8 am next morning when we were at our breakfast, the Sabha friends requested Mali to give his best that day. Mali in his usual reposeful way asked to be provided with drinks to rise to the occasion. They managed to get a doctor's prescription and brought several pegs for Mali. The programme was to commence at 4-15 pm and Gururajappa, Alangudi Ramachandran (ghatam) and myself were ready by 3-30 pm. The organisers arrived by 3-30 pm only to find impossible to get Mali's room opened. He was fast

asleep. With herculean efforts, we forced open his room around 4-30 pm. Ready Mali was no easier and by the time we reached the venue it was 6 pm. A huge crowd was waiting in the hot Sun from 3-30 pm. We got on the dais at 6-15 pm and it took another 15 minutes for Mali to start blowing his instrument. The audience



Mali

was as restless as we on the dais were. Mali started after lot of initial bustlings and tumultuous confusion. 'Ninnukori' (Mohana) was taken up in a ticklish gait. The first line 'Ninnukoriyu-nnamura' was rendered, first two counts in Chatusra, the next four counts from the ring finger to the completion of first Dhrutha in thrishra vilamba and the last two counts, the second dhrutha in thrishra madhyakala, leaving an impression that the speed variations were going wrong! He would play on and asked Gururajappa who played the full line in a single common speed to repeat. Mali would not relent and demanded repetition on

violin.

Such mathematical renditions were not common those days. I requested Alangudi to keep the thalam and played the mridangam almost beating the pulse with a sign to Gururajappa to just follow. This went on for a full 30 minutes to complete the ethugada swaras.

People were all restless as we ourselves were. Then followed "Parathpara" (Vachaspathi) in such a slow tempo, that for sometime we were wondering whether it was alapana or kriti. After such intriguing items followed an alapana of Kambodhi. The calm serene atmosphere built up by Mali in the mandhrasancharas made everyone forget all that preceded. That was Mali. It was nearing 9 pm and I was worried about my return journey. When I reminded Mali of the time, he took up the microphone and explained that though he was prepared to play any length of time his accompanists were demanding an early closure. The audience bounced back and one of them got up and threatened of dire consequences if we did not oblige.

But Mali continued, took up an alap for five minutes, followed up with thanam for three minutes and rounded off a pallavi, swaras, thrikala all in five minutes and by 9-30 pm sounded the mangalam.

Gururajappa was just checking his remuneration and I hastened him to hurry up to catch the train. As we entered the platform, the train was moving and we got into a ladies compartment only to be chastised by the occupants. We managed to get down



at the next stop and moved to our reserved compartment. When I met Mali after two days, I asked him when he had returned from Erode. He was surprised and asked me how I knew that he had gone to Erode!

One evening Chowdiah drove down from his Ayyanar College in Basavanagudi to my Visweswarapuram residence and asked me to rush. Getting into the car, I asked what the matter was. Driving slowly, he lamented at the news of the death of Flute Mali. Despite all his misdemeanors, Mali's artistry is inimitable and his contribution to the fluteline technique a great asset. It is unfortunate that we lost him. He showed me a copy of "Janavani" carrying a photo and the obituary of Mali.

We landed in the K. V. Iyer's Vyayamashala where Mali was lodged and tapped the door. It was a laughing Mali who opened the door and explained that it was he who had sent the message to the Press! Some one had told Mali that his 'ayushya' (life span) would increase if people talked about his death. Chowdiah got infuriated and blamed Mali and the entire return route, it was nothing but choice epithets on Mali!

### Different Story

A concert at an old Madras Sabha had a different story. As usual the concert commenced one and half hour late and in a place where the laya vyavahara was involved, it was the 'Koraippu' in kalpanaswaras. In a monotonic phrase, Mali resorted to nadai-bhedha with a ticklish "Karavai". The violinist could not reproduce the actual gait and Mali was adamant. A skirmish followed. the violinist said that all that is produced in flute cannot be reproduced in violin. Mali would not accept and challenged that he would play the violin and demonstrate it.

The violinist countered the challenge and asked if Mali could play all that he played in violin. Mali accepted the challenge. The intelligent violinist bowed the violin with two different swaras on two different strings and produced a 'chord' with the flute on hand and realising that he cannot reproduce this, Mali jokingly questioned why the violinist was playing a harmonium.

The violinist spontaneously retorted that it was known that Mali was



GNB

drunk but was he so inebriated as to not being able to distinguish between a harmonium and violin.

Mali repeated his demand that he would play the concert himself without the violin. Here was a different story. The violinist thundered that the concert should either be cancelled or he be allowed to play for the rest of the concert. He threatened the secretary to sue him as his name had been published and the concert had to go on with him. After persuasions both came back to continue the concert. There are several anecdotes in Mali's chacquered career. Mali was a good violinist; infact he had given an exclusive solo violin recital at the City Institute pandal in Chamarajapet for the Sree Rama Seva Mandali.

### Ariyakudi

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar is a hallowed name in Carnatic Music. It is to his credit that the present concert format (a varnam, one or two small krithis, a krithi with alapana and crisp swaras, a krithi after a detail alapana, niraval, swaras with a thani avarthanam, another short krithi in brisk speed, Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi mostly in Adi tala, 4 kalai, 3/4 eduppu - thrikala and thrisra, swaras, sometimes in ragamalika, virutham -sloka, pasuram, a devaranama, javali, thillana, and mangalam) is traced. There is also a complaint in a section of musicians that Ariyakudi diluted our music, flooding it with a number of items, thereby reducing the alapana and other manodharma aspects.

But generally, connoisseurs and musicians were of the view that Ariyakudi popularised our music by providing a rich variety in the repertoire. Essence of raga bhava was the criterion and repetitive portions of long presentations were avoided.

However, there is no doubt that Ariyakudi was a past master in rendering short kalpanaswaras and bring out the character of the raga with tight laya bhava as well. He was the unrivalled king of his pataanthara and whatever he sang was considered an authority to be followed by all. He was in very great demand during his days.

Ariyakudi was selected for the first President's Award (Sangeet Natak Akademy, Delhi) and Mali wrote in The Hindu questioning the norms. Most of the musicians were shocked at these 'antics' of Mali. I showed the paper to Chowdiah who was also taken aback and asked me to find out from Mali, what he meant.

I went to Mali and he clarified that Ariyakudi was singing several com-



positions of Mysore Vasudevachar and Acharya who was a highly venerated vocalist should not have been ignored and should have been given the award earlier. Chowdiah instantly responded joining issue with Mali. Vasudevachar was given the Award the next year.

Ariyakudi's repertoire was very rich and whatever a listener asked, he would respond immediately remembering the sahitya of so many krithis without looking at a slip. His ragamalika pallavi 'Shankara-bharanam Azhathodi Vaadi Kalyani- Darbarukku' with kalpanaswara in the respective ragas at the relevant Sahityakshara was a rage for sometime.

Whenever in Mysore State, he would invariably render 'Nambi Kettavarillavo' in thrisra thripata in detail with niraval, swaraprasthara of 'Garudagamane' with a layavinyasa of the percussionist. 'Kandu Kandu Nee Enna', 'Kaliyugadali' and a few devaranamas were always eagerly looked for. Ariyakudi - Chowdiah - Mani was a combination which would fetch handsome collection for sabhas. Ariyakudi's treatment would be precise and bring out the personality of the raga at any given point of time.

His swaras were soaked in raga bhava and he would at times resort to rhythmic calculations which would never spoil the beauty and grandeur of the ragas. The present practice of rendering 'thrikala' from the 'eduppu' is mostly attributed to Ariyakudi. Palghat Mani had the greatest of regards to Ariyakudi and wrote an article 'Ariyakudi Pechhullavarai Paduvar' (Ariyakudi would sing as long as he could speak) in a felicitation volume on the 75th birthday of Ariyakudi. Ariyakudi was a perfect public relations man and would keep acquaintance with all those he came in contact with.

I was married in 1964 at Mysore on a Friday. I had returned with my bride on Saturday. Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha had organised Ariyakudi's concert on Sunday. That morning Ariyakudi surprised me and all the members of my family visiting the Jayanagar residence, of my sister with whom I was put up. When I plainly expressed my pleasant surprise at his visit, Ariyakudi interjected "You are coming whenever and wherever I sing. Should I not come to see



Palani Subramanya Pillai

you and your bride to bless you!" Words failed to express my feelings. That was Ariyakudi. His demise in 1967 created a big void that could not be filled up. It is strange that Chowdiah also passed away the same year- 1967.

### Palani Subbudu

Palani Subramanya Pillai was a great percussionist, his Mridangam had a unique style of his own. Palani school of mridangam play is by itself a pataanthara with special virtues and credits. Palani's 'gumkees' are proverbial and the operation of his right thumb on the 'thoppi' is something remarkable (Palani was a left hander).

His accompaniment to a gayaka or vadaka would be fully supportive without any hindrance. His solo turns

would bring out the eloquence of his laya srusti with intricate rhythm pattern coupled with the left and right coordination of the highest order. He would resort to laya vinyasas in the sophisticated 'Thiruppugazh' thalaas. He passed away very early at his 54th year in 1962. He deserved more honours than he had received.

His accompaniment with Lalgudi Jayaraman for an excellent veena recital of S. Balachander is unforgettable.

For that concert at the City Institute pendal for Sree Ramaseva Mandali, he asked for my mridangam. He opened up the left thoppi to suit his large palm to such an extent that I could not play in that thoppi again. He asked me to get a mridangam repairer and I took P. V. Parameshwaran who had just then started a concern of mridangam making and repairing. When he had applied the 'karanai' (black round spot on the right drum head), Palani was furious and went on to explain how it should be done. Parameshwaran learnt this unique technique and later turned out to be one of our best instrument manufacturer and repairer.

Two artistes who passed away in 1965 leaving indelible impressions on me are Alathur Subba Iyer and G.N. Balasubramanyam, called as Subbudu and GNB. Alathur brothers provided classical music of the highest order, it would not be incorrect if I assert that their music was my model. Whether it was alapana or a clean cut rendition of a krithi, Sahitya, Vinyasa or Laya Vyavahara (kanakku in Tamil, lekkachara in Kannada) in swara or delineation of Pallavi, sukha bhava was of prime importance. 'Shantha-mulekha', 'Sri Raghu Varaprameya', 'Koluvamragada' are some of the krithis that are still green in my mind. Surati, Natakuranji, Nayaki, Devagandhari, Mukhari are some of the ragas handled exquisitely. Their



Pallavi in 5/8 and 7/8 'eduppus' without loss of any raga bhava are exemplary. The rendition of 'Ninnuvina Mari' in viloma chapu set in Deshadi tala in the company of Lalgudi Jayaraman and Palghat Mani Iyer can never be forgotten.

In a concert at the Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha, this was the major item and Mani Iyer played one of his best laya vinyasa for 15 minutes after a wonderful awe-inspiring 'koraippu'

for the charana 'Paramalobhulanu', with a 2/7 'eduppu', participated by three tier rendition of the brothers and Lalgudi with Mani Iyer right down to 1/8 avartha without a single miss or blot. Later the Pallavi, 'Thenparam Girivazhar Murugaguhane...' in Natakuranji, set to khanda tripata, 4 kalais with the take off after 5 counts was rendered in thrikala and thrishra, instead of allowing Lalgudi to play the thrikala, they asked Mani Iyer to play. He Rendered a lightning,

thunderlike short laya vinyasa. The Pallavi was converted into a single kalai with 1 1/4 eduppa and the sahitya was rendered in one avartha, 2, 3 and 4 avarthas and back. Subbudu demanded Lalgudi to play this. Lalgudi with his usual calm demeanour played it so perfectly that even Mani Iyer was prompted to say 'bheshh!' Perhaps we cannot listen to or witness such pallavi expositions of Alathur - Lalgudi - Mani Iyer.

*to be concluded*

## IN LIGHTER VEIN

# At the End of it All !

Manu Vijay

There were many things that one looked forward to at the recently concluded Ms world pageant. There were those that wanted to see if the corporate house led by one of India's most proclaimed actors would fall flat on its face for its organisational abilities. Some wanted to see how any of his wives the Sultan of Bruenie.... brought to the extravaganza, would. Dr Rajkumar accept AB's invitation? Would Ruby Bhatia make a fool of herself?

After reading reams of news print about this much hyped event, few gave a thought to poor Ms World. She would be crowned of course-but that was incidental, KEB, anyway, put us out of our agony for a few hours we

missed the pageant altogether-but not the excitement prior to the show.

This brought to my mind some of the hype that precedes a Bharathanatyam Rangapravesha. While the student and family put in hours of agonizing effort, the event is almost anti climatic.

The frenzy of activity fizzles out as the final Tillana is over and only a few memories remain. The audience, of course, has a few hours of fun. We want to know the latest gossip in the field who's wearing what-which dancer is on an American tour, who has programmes in Chennai, which Guru pays the least to her/his musicians, which guests are invited etc.

Political influences, romantic liaisons, latest fads in costume, jewellery and stage decor, programme tour are discussed and dissected in detail. The poor dancer, is of course forgotten. If she's so-and-so's student XYZ's niece, or belonging to this family she has got to be so good or abilities bad. The dancer's abilities and diligence is quite lost in maze of speeches, guests, decor and gossip, and at the end of it all, leaves her feeling depleted and lost instead of the excitement of standing at the threshold of fulfilling career in the dance field. She has of course, the albums to look at and remember much like the Ms. World pageant faded into oblivion leaving a mangled cricket pitch at the KSCA Stadium.\*

## PHOENIX

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**NEW YEAR**



# Focus on Music - Laya



*Bzngalore K.Venkatram being honoured by Umayalapuram Sivaraman*

The 28th Annual Music Conference of the 91 years old Bangalore Gayana Samaja, held at its auditorium from November 27, 96, was inaugurated by Ganapathi Sachidananda Swamiji of Avadhoota Datta Peeta, Mysore.

In his inaugural address the swamiji explained the significance of various swaras in music, its salutary effect and medical values. He stressed the need for encouragement and support to classical music.

N.Pattabhiraman, Editor of Shruti, a music monthly from Madras released two audio cassettes rendered by M.S. Sheela and observed that artistes should restrict the number of compositions in a cassette and instead provide better scope for kalpana aspects like raga, nerval etc.

Veteran percussionist Bangalore K Venkatram, who was unanimously elected as the president of the conference in his scholarly address spoke on his close associations with the Sa-

maja and recalled his association with late V.T. Srinivasan, the founder president of the Samaja. He remembered his guru, Ghatam Manjunath and the support he got from the violin maestro T. Chowdiah. He observed that the number of compositions in the con-

certs has increased there by limiting the scope for improvised music. Lauding the highly evolved state of the art of contemporary musicians, Venkatram dwelt on the different roles of laya vadyas, as accompaniments and with individual personality.

Expressing his happiness at the systematic assessment by the AIR he appealed the Doordarshan to extend the timeslot for classical music similar to AIR.

Sathyanarayana Setty, Vice President proposed a vote of thanks. Earlier Padma Murthy rendered the invocation and H. Kamala Nath the welcome address.

## Lecture Demonstration

In his lecture demonstration presented in the evening, Venkatram presented a two-tier Laya Vinyasa, 'Laya Vadya Vaividhya' presented several percussions used in recordings and light music like Dikki, Roso-rosa, Nagara, Poong, Tamarin,



*N.Pattabhiraman, Editor, SRUTI releasing the cassettes bf M.S.Sheela*





Dr Rajaramanna honouring V. Krishnan

Damdi, Idakka, Khol, Ghata Singari, Tape, Marracos, Base Dolak etc. Most of these instruments were seen for the first time. Bali, Shivu and Kashyap rendered these instruments.

The second part was a laya vinyasa. The basic theme was a sloka on Saraswathi and the relevant Solkattu of Shahaji Maharaja. The sloka and solkattu were rendered in Misra Jampai. The 'Kuraippu' was planned to present groups of sruthi and other vadyas. The finale was build up with precision and clarity.

### Academic Sessions

The academic sessions every day had renditions of krithis with reference to swara, tala and laya to suit the theme of the conference, 'Music-Laya'. S.K. Ramachandra Rao in his 'Music in Vedas' called for an extensive research on the aspect of evolution of tala and laya from the Vedas. He said that music

V.Doreswamy Iyengar, who formally inaugurated the academic sessions observed that the proceedings would help the students of music and connoisseurs to understand the intricacies of the art for better appreciation. Ramachandra Rao stated that music is undergoing changes over the years but of the six vegangaas the

'Sheeksha', dealing with the phonetics, pronunciation and 'chanda' are noteworthy for recitation of vedas. He explained all aspects of vaidika and lowkika chandas.

Noted mridangam vidwan, Vellore Ramabhadran explained the 'sarva laghu' pattern of mridangam playing to the accompaniment of the vocal duet of R.K. Padmanabha and D.V. Nagarajan.

The second day's sessions saw T. Keshava Bhatt speaking on 'Tala and Laya' in Yakshagana. He traced the salient differences between the 'thenku

thittu and badagu thittu' and explained various talas in use. Explaining the two versions of the 'thrivude', the nidhana thrivude and thwarithas, the 'thitthithai' taalas, Bhat observed that in sahitya and artha are predominant in Yakshagana as different from Sangeetha where Bhava and raga are dominant. Mridanga Vidwan A.V. Anand observed that the misra chapur and thrishra thripata resembled the two varieties of thrivude of Yakshagana.

Noted academician and scholar of Mysore, R.Sathyannarana in his lucid explanation on 'Tala chapters in ancient Sanskrit texts on music' observed that tala system of Indian music is unique. He referred to ancient texts in three stages. Natya shastra, Dattilam, Bruhadadeshi and Abhinava Guptas commentary and Bharata Bhashya formed the first part. Manosollasa, Sangita Choodamani, Sangeetha Sudhakara, Sangeetha Samaya Sara and Sangeetha Rathnakara formed the second part. He observed that there are 4000 slokas pertaining to talas only.

H.S. Anasuya Kulkarni demonstrated and explained select drums of Papua New Guinea and Uganda on the third day. Kundu, Gengang drums were played. Noted music and dance critic



Vidwan S.Shankar in concert





At the sadas of 28th Music Conference

B.V.K. Sastry explained the features of drums of Africa and traced the dhwani laya vaividhya of instruments and complimented the artiste on her lucid presentation.

Bangalore K Venkatram, the conference President explained the varying and vanishing tala traditions with illustrations. G.R. Jaya and V. Kalavathi lent vocal support. Disappearance of deshadi and madhyaditalas, conceptual differences between misra chapu and thrishra thripata talas, earlier and present versions of the operation of rupaka tala were demonstrated. Noted vainika, V. Doreswamy Iyengar, complimented Venkatram on his explanations with clear expression.

Versatile vocalist M.S. Sheela demonstrated pallavis as presented in earlier days and present. A pallavi in Mudrika tala, one of the Ashtothara talas, three speeds of pallavi rendition as per prevalent practice in Mysore style. Contemporary practice of thrakala and thrisra for four kalai - 3/4 eduppu pallavis, samples of pratiloma and sophisticated 5/8 and 7/8 eduppus were demonstrated. Venkatram narrated the details of several earlier pallavi exponents of yester years and available texts on pallavi.

The fourth day saw the noted art,

dance and music critic and the editor of Phoenix, S.N. Chandrasekharspoke on all aspects of thattu-mettu-nattuegaru thattu / mettu- thattu, mettu-jaru- mandi. Demonstrating various rechakas like Hastha, Kati etc he observed that Greeva rechaka is not in use these days. Students of Padmini Rao participated in the demonstration and Damodar Bhatt played the mridangam.

Shankaran gave a lucid demonstration of the Palani style of mridangam playing. Sankaran referred to the dexterity and artistry of the great Palani Subramanya Pillai, nadai - sorkal, subtle introduction of nadai-bhedas without loosing the aesthetics, prayogas of gumki were amply demonstrated. Sankaran referred to laya as the "Rate of Speed of events". He referred to the Thiruppugazh talas which his guru revealed. Sankaran spoke on his publication on the introduction of the notation system to preserve the patterns with an accent on "not-to-loose" the fingering techniques. Venkataram referred to the maintenance and upkeep of instruments by Palani and the aesthetics in the vyavahara of the Palani style.

The penultimate day had Kanaka Swamy rendering select krithis of Dikshithar, with a special reference to vibhakthi krithis. Venkataram ex-

plained the various krithis series of Dikshithar and referred to the publication (on Dikshithar) of the National book trust authored by T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, scholar-cum-musician.

Padma Gurudutt explained the Laya varieties in chandas, vachanas and ugabhogas, extensively describing the details of chandas of Kannada. She narrated the vachana and gayana concepts in vachanas and ugabhogas. Mysore V. Subramanya observed that laya delineation similar to Thiruppugazhs are not available in Kannada. He referred to the anibaddha narration of vachanas and ugabhogas in earlier times and the nibaddha narrations of the present day. Vocalist T.S. Satyavathi gave a raga darshana of Saveri, profusely illustrating points and explaining the different swaras with suitable narrations. She rendered "Rama Baana" to illustrate her observations. She referred to the work of K.S. Nagarjan whose collection involves 87 compositions in Saveri.

H. Kamalanath explained contribution of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, as part of the birth centenary celebrations on the concluding day of the experts' sessions. Profusely quoting from an article of B.V.K. Sastry published in Gayana Samrajya. K.S. Mahadevan (former editor of "Shanmukha") and Venkataram spoke on the artistry, personality and contribution of Vishwanatha Iyer.

A symposium on "Laya Vadyas in Karnataka Music" was interesting. Key-note address was presented by art critic K.S. Mahadevan, participants included A. Veerbhadraiah, T.N. Padmanabhan, T.S. Satyavathi, Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Mysore Subramanya, V. Krishna, N.R. Ananthanarayana.

Expectations of participants were discussed. Senior accompanists, not accompanying versatile competent lady artistes, timings and duration of solo turns for percussion accompanists, problems faced by accompanists



were explained. Need for research and development instrumentation of laya vadyas, creation of exclusive compositions for percussion ensembles were highlighted.

Curtains of the festival came down on November 3, 96. Dr Raja Ramanna, eminent scientist and noted Piano artist presided over the function. Mridangam maestro Umayala puram K. Shivaraman conferred the title "Sangeetha Kala Rathna" on Bangalore K. Venkataram. Sivaraman in his address referred to Venkataram as the son of a post master and a past-master of percussion art; he lauded the services and contribution of Venkataram to the field of music and especially to percussive art.

Artistes of the year R. Seetharam, C. Krishna Murthy, S. Chandrashekar, A.V. Anand, H. Narasimha Murthy (Master Hirannaiah), T.N. Padmanabhan and E.P. Alamelu were felicitated, V. Parthasarathy, Managing Director of State Bank of Mysore, distributed the prizes to the winners of the music competitions and junior concerts.

Raja Ramanna enlogised the services of Venkataram and complimented him for popularising percussive arts and artistes. Master Hirannaiah in his highly humorous address, thanked the Samaja on behalf of the artistes felicitated. ■

Photos: Phani Raj

## Young Artistes Hold Sway

**L**ocal talent had every every reason to be happy with the conference. Besides a host of young, competent accompanists, the week long fare featured three vocalists from its ranks.

Names like Nagamani Srinath, R.A. Ramamani and S. Shankar are reputed among the present generation of musicians as their counterparts elsewhere like U. Srinivas (mandolin), Rajkumar Bharati, E. Gayatri (veena), the Hyderabad Sisters, Lalitha-Haripriya and Sikkil sisters, Neela-Kunjumani. It goes to their credit that the former acquitted themselves as impressively as the others.

Much has been written about these artistes in recent times and their performance in the conference was in

keeping with their reputation. But there was something more to it in the conference and that is the emergence of names in the youth wing. Assessment of their fare in the afternoon session is worthwhile, as many of them are sure to hit headlines in the years to come.

The afternoon sessions featured some noteworthy talent of the younger generation of musicians, the concert part of the eight day conference got underway with an impressive 'laya vinyasa' by the percussion artistes of the Ayyanar College of Music under the direction of ghatam Vidwan



A. Vasudha

Bangalore K. Venkataram, the conference president.

There was a full array of rhythmic instruments, the ensemble revealing the one solid element that lifts a 'laya vinyasa' to a height-intensity. A collective effort where each artiste displayed his mastery over the technique.

On the concert side, M.S. Vidya's vocal stood out for its scholarship. Her varnam (Hindola), a composition of her father, the late M. Seshagiri Achar, gave her a lilting start. Though her voice was not in fettle, her Kalyani raga-thana-pallavi for a complex chatushra-jhampe, khanda nadai, showed her as a complete singer. The flute recital of A.P. Sarvotham was equally impressive. His alap for Shankarabharana (Enduku Peddala) was neat, revealing a steady blowing. But it has yet to acquire resonance.

Hamsini Nagendra as she intoned Simhendramadhyama (Dayaleni) appeared in a hurry if not over confident. Her Kambodi (raga, tana, pallavi) was more convincing both in its lyrical essence and rhythmic elegance.

Pushpa Kashinath in her veena shows remarkable felicity as evidenced in the varna (Jaganmohini). Her interpretation of Kapi (Mee valla) was as impressive for its modal fidelity. All she seems to need is a greater sense of involvement. But her technique is sure, Dharmavati and Thodi revealing lilting lines.

The popular duo Roopa and Deepa Rao has made a name in the light music genre. Their alap is (Bilahari and Vachaspati) neat, but the phrasings are short of colour and flourish.

But even as S. Vasudha of Mysore started the Saranga varnam, one could discern class. Her Sriranjini (Bhuvanidasudani) and the lovely pallavi in Shankarabharanam reaffirmed a mastery in the style that is associated with a generation of musicians that, alas, is fast dying out.

Overall it was a reassuring series.

.S.N. Chandrasekhar



Rajeev Tharanth

## THE RESTLESS GENIUS

Krishna

"I had not seen a sarod being played till I was 19. What I did hear of the pre-Ali Akbar sarod turned me away from that sound. I was an adoring fan of Pandit Ravishankar who was a frequent visitor to Bangalore, in the 50's. A performance of his at the Town Hall was advertised.

Later it was mentioned that a sarod player called Ustad Ali Akbar Khan was coming too. I was sad. I decided to concentrate on the sitar.

The evening came and the concert began with raag Puriyakalyan. Chaturlal waited behind the Table. In a very short while, this strange balding Buddha on the sarod, draped over his exotic instrument, just took off, soared and explored the depths of the dark silences and burst into volcanic fury - metaphors fail me. I was a changed man. My world was emptied of everything except that man and that sound."

This is Pandit Rajeev Taranath one of the Rajyotsava awardees this year and one of the foremost sarod players in India today, narrating his first encounter with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Recently, this Bangalore-based maestro was invited as a Visiting Professor of Indian Music by the prestigious CALARTS, California Institute of Performing Arts, USA, an institution established by the famous Walt Disney Foundation. After Pandit Ravi Shankar, he is the only other Indian to be honoured with such an invitation.

Talking to this restless genius is always fascinating. There were a few

crucial questions to ask of him about his formative years, music, his recent visit to CALARTS, et al.

Q] Being the son of Pandit Taranath, who must have been a Renaissance role-model to you, imbibing a vivid idealism and a passion for excellence must have been very natural and important. What made you give up the promise of a brilliant academic career and go off into music?

A] I started learning music from my father, the late Pandit Taranath, a man with a remarkable versatility of achievement and range of interests. A thinker, reformer, doctor, educationist, writer, mystic, musician, what have you!

At the beginning of this century, he was to Karnataka what Tagore was to Bengal. I was around four years, when he started me on the tabla. At around six, he taught me vocal music. When I was short of seven he put me to learn under a series of good musicians, who stayed in our house from time to time. Prominent among them were Venkat Rao Ramdurgkar, the senior most disciple of Sawai Gandharva of the Kirana Gharana; and Shankar Rao Joshi of the Gwalior Gharana.

I was considered a prodigy and made to give concerts which I didn't like. I liked the resulting adulation of adult admirers though. They gave me tanpuras and tabalas for presents.

My voice braking was quite a psychological crisis for me. I began

my broadcasting career as a singer in fact. I was successful, but bored and gave up. Meanwhile, I studied English literature and stood first in the University. But, more than that I was a successful debater and orator for my institutions. Active person in what might be called intellectual pursuits.

I expected and many expected that I would take a shot at the Civil Services or Foreign Services or go into pure academics. That I did not. I went off to do music.

This happened sometime in 1955, when Rajeevji was 22. He stayed with the Ustad in Bombay and then in Calcutta for six years. Reminiscing, Rajeevji says with deepest reverence that today behind all his music is the rich resonance of Baba (Ustad Ali Akbar Khan). He has been among the greatest during his learning years. Those who taught, gave him precise guidance (infact it was Pandit Ravi Shankar who urged him back to music as a career, when personal problems pushed him into English teaching and kept him there for long) and supportive care - Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Annapurna Devi, and Pandit Nikhil Banerjee. Rajeevji feels privileged "to create and perform in the aura of their blessings".

Today Rajeevji is one of the finest exponents of the ancient 'Senia' school of Hindustani music, which originated from the immortal Mia Tansen and has nourished in this century, the greats like Ustad Allauddin Khan and his children Ustad Ali Akbar Khan



and Annapurna Devi and disciples Pandit Ravi Shankar Pandit Nikhil Banerjee, and Pandit Pannalal Ghosh. He has travelled extensively and been acclaimed by serious music lovers the world over.

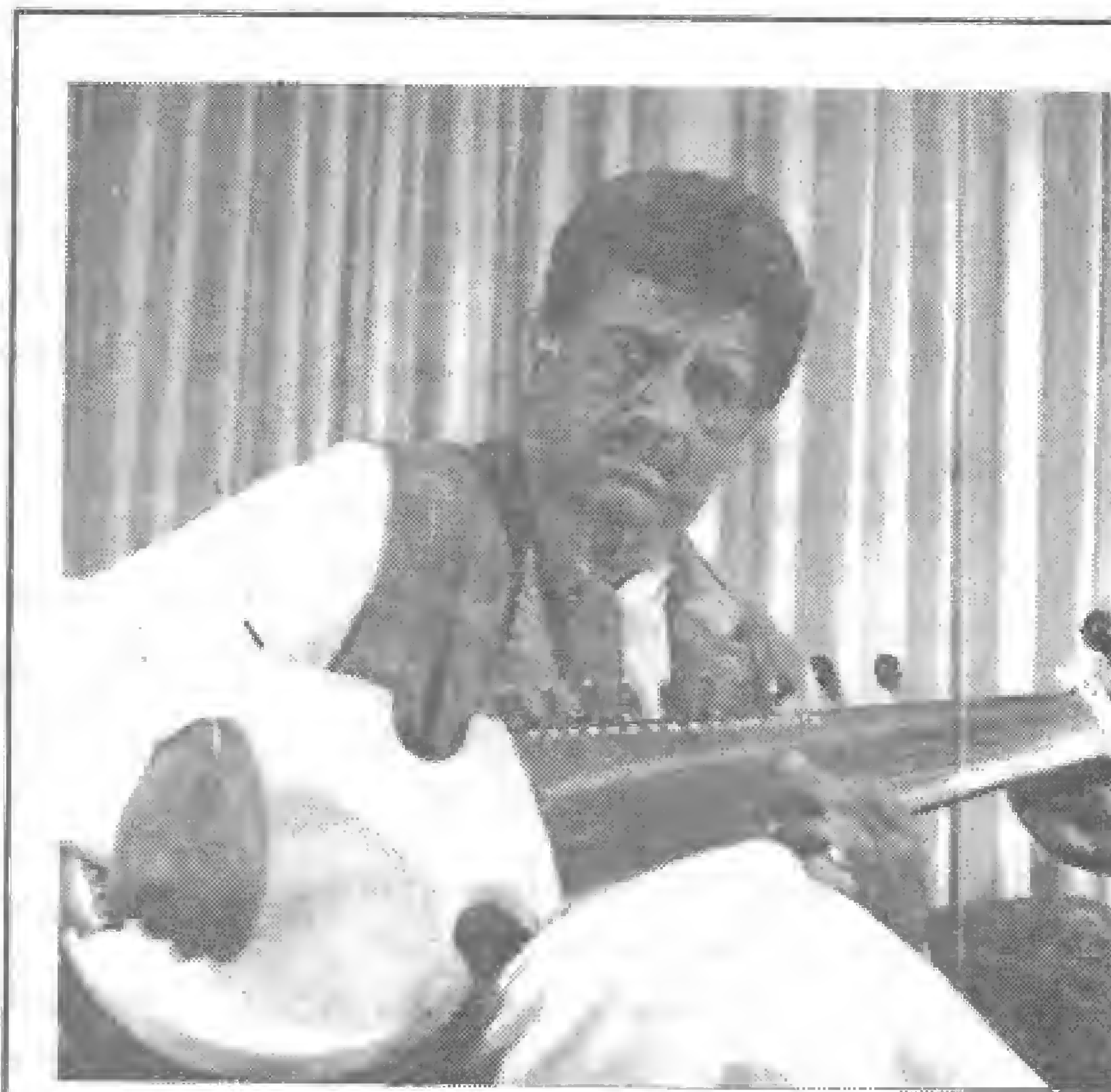
He is the first Indian to have played at the famous Sydney Opera House in Australia. A frequent visitor to the US and Europe, he has taken the richness of Indian music to Hungary, Egypt, Eden. A music critic at New York reviews rhapsodically "Rajeev Taranath's sarod improvisation mixes the spiritual and the spirited" and calls his music, "an exuberant rhythmic celebration". He is responding to Rajeevji's music which comes thro' as a constant dialectic between deep classical rigour and an irrepressible emotional intensity.

The careful intellect which chooses, experiments with and juxtaposes tones and textures of sound can also storm into grand passion or relax in lovely lyricism.

Rajeevji has worked with a plurality of medium like films, writing, English teaching. A brilliant thinker, he is one of the few musicians who can talk intensely and interestingly about politics, society and culture. His music for the first new wave film in Kannada 'Samskara' set a trend in music direction for serious cinema in the South. 'Pallavi' and 'Sringaaramasa' and Malayalam films like Aravindan's 'Kanchana Seeta' followed. 'Pokkuvayil' was an unusual experiment where the narrative of the film was set to the logic and sequence of its music! Vasudevan Nair's 'Kadavu' more recently, to

name a few, have all won him admiration and awards.

Music drew him away from writing. But he was at the centre of the modern Kannada literary movement at one time. The few but brilliant pieces of writing during his years as an English Professor, have found international recognition.



Teaching seems to be at the centre of his being. As a Ford Foundation Scholar he has researched on the "teaching techniques of Maihar-Alauddin Gharana". As a teacher who has taught Indian classical music in India and across cultures, he talks about the validity of the art of teaching.

*Q] Is music for all or is it more a matter of genes and genius?*

A] I don't think we should be talking much too facilely about genes. What do the genes carry? Do they carry music, if so at what level of delicacy? Hindustani music? Sarod music? An ability to play Chandra-nandan? But certainly intelligent practice, intelligent learning and imaginative teaching - - - all presided over by a durable seriousness, should

lead a student somewhere, someplace good, where he starts deriving satisfaction and becomes aesthetically locomotive.

*Q] Tell us about the ambience of CALARTS and the very interesting if ambitious concept of 'World Music' that the institute has evolved.*

A] There are very excellent conservatives teaching classical music, classical dance, like ballet in many U.S. cities. But CALARTS is the only institute, where a range of Western Music - - - classical, traditional jazz, modern, post modern, computer music, opera singing - - - everything taught side by side with other Music and Arts, in which also high level training is available, all the non-western musics, are gathered under World Music. There is a constant

attempt thro' the year to bring together the Western and non-western music in structures, where they interface, interact and fuse. True, the results could be quite scattered or spacy sometimes. But always there is that opening available for that special, sudden epiphanic combination.

Then, I have suggested some changes in the structuring of the world music. Some of the people who go to the States from underdeveloped countries also want to secure their places thereby making world music programmes sift options, the fear at the background being that the presence of difficult learning items might reduce the number of students opting for the programme! Too many purveyors of things Indian abroad sit back in the new found cosiness and talk tirelessly



about peace, spirituality, Nadabrahma and all the other 'mentionables' associated with this subcontinent.

This is very wrong because they themselves have learnt competence in processes difficult and demanding in the 'extreme' - - - And I was trying to say that if one level of competence was aimed at in Western music teaching was necessary. The students accepted some of my abrasiveness quite well. (Soon they got hooked on to the excitement) honing their skills. One student actually accompanied me during the end of the semester concern!

*Q] Students, who register for this programme what are they looking for and where does the whole thing lead them?*

A] Learn! If they do very well to get across the ethnic barrier, people of the Mother culture will accept them even if they offer slightly uninspired stuff my sort of allowing it - - - with phrases like "For a foreigner he is doing very well :". But to be accepted and respected independent of biodata, race or culture, then one is required to achieve a very high standard indeed. It is possible. It is just a beginning. What I and the students there are aiming at is to make them competent performers not complete musicians, not so much the raagas but useful techniques which when internalised, the imagination will create and create within the challenging tightness of the classical raaga. I look forward to pushing them a little further during the next three months of my second visit.

Students wrote letters to the President carrying a lot of admiration for my somewhat driving kind of teaching. The authorities requested me to stayback at CALARTS permanently. But as a performer, I could not settle down there. So I have accepted to be a permanent Visiting Professor there, that is I teach at the institute whenever I am in the U.S.

Rajeevji left for the U.S. in September this year for yet another session

at CALARTS. It is time indeed that we Indians felt a proper pride in the achievements of this fine musician.

## Music Competition

Music Competition was organised by Bangalore Gayana Samaja. The competition was tough and the quality good.

Judges had a tough time in choosing the winners. Following are the winners at the annual conference of the Samaja:

### Juniors' Concert

Sumitra Nitin, R.A. Dakshina Murthy, A.P. Srinivas, Madhura S. Kumar, K. Prashanth, K. Srinivas, B.C. Manjunath, S. Prashanth, Jyotsna Manjunath, V. Ganesh, N. Amruth, B.N. Sathyanarayana Murali, Pushpa Raju and K. Jayashree.

### Juniors' Competition

V.V. Rukmini, C.N. Vasudha Prahlad, R. Shruthi, M.R. Srinidhi, S. Ashok, R. Madhu Kashyap, Shree Krishna, B.J. Bharath, C. Kiran, C.N. Viswanath, Amith A. Nadig, Priya Sheshadri, P. Nanditha, T. Karthik Ashwin, Karna B. Athreya, B. Divya, S. Lakshmi, S. Datta, A. Shiva Kumar, A. Shashank, R. Kavyashree, M. Bharath, R.T. Vidya, B.G. Jayanth, Swetha Keshav, N. Sumana, Shree Krupa, K.S. Swetha, G. Sriranjani, Aruna Ranganathan, K.T. Udaya Kiran, T. Pramod Kumar, N.R. Deepashree and B.K. Raghu.

### Senior's Competition

Chitra Srikrishna, B. Sreerama Bhatt, K. Bhargavi, Manasi Prasad, M.S. Shilpa, R. Suchethan, B.S. Anand, P. Srinivasa Prassana, Matangi Rajasekhar, M.S. Gayathri, S.K. Raghavendra, Vamshi Raghu, R. Arvind, Ranjani Siddanthi, Geetha R. Bhatt and S. Karthik.

## Nupura's Calender of Events

**December 19 :** Bharathanatyam by students of Nupura at the National Pathology Conference, Indian Institute of Science.

**December 23 :** Bharathanatyam Ranga-pravesha of Mridul Rajashekhar at Ravindra Kalakshethra - 6.30 p.m.

**December 26 :** Bharathanatyam by student of Nupura at the Dakshina Bharatha Sahithya Sammelan, Karkala.

## Sri Ganasudha Sangeetha Sabha Bhadravathi

### Silver Jubilee Year Music Festival

**December 25 :** M.S. Vidya (vocal), R. Raghuram (violin), A.V. Anand (mridangam) and L. Bhimachar (morching).

**December 26 :** V. Ananth (flute), J.K. Sridhar (violin), A.V. Anand (mridangam) and L. Bhimachar (morching).

**December 27 :** Basavanagudi Nataraj and N. Sunitha (violin duet), Nagendra Udupa (mridangam) and Giridhar Udupa (ghata).

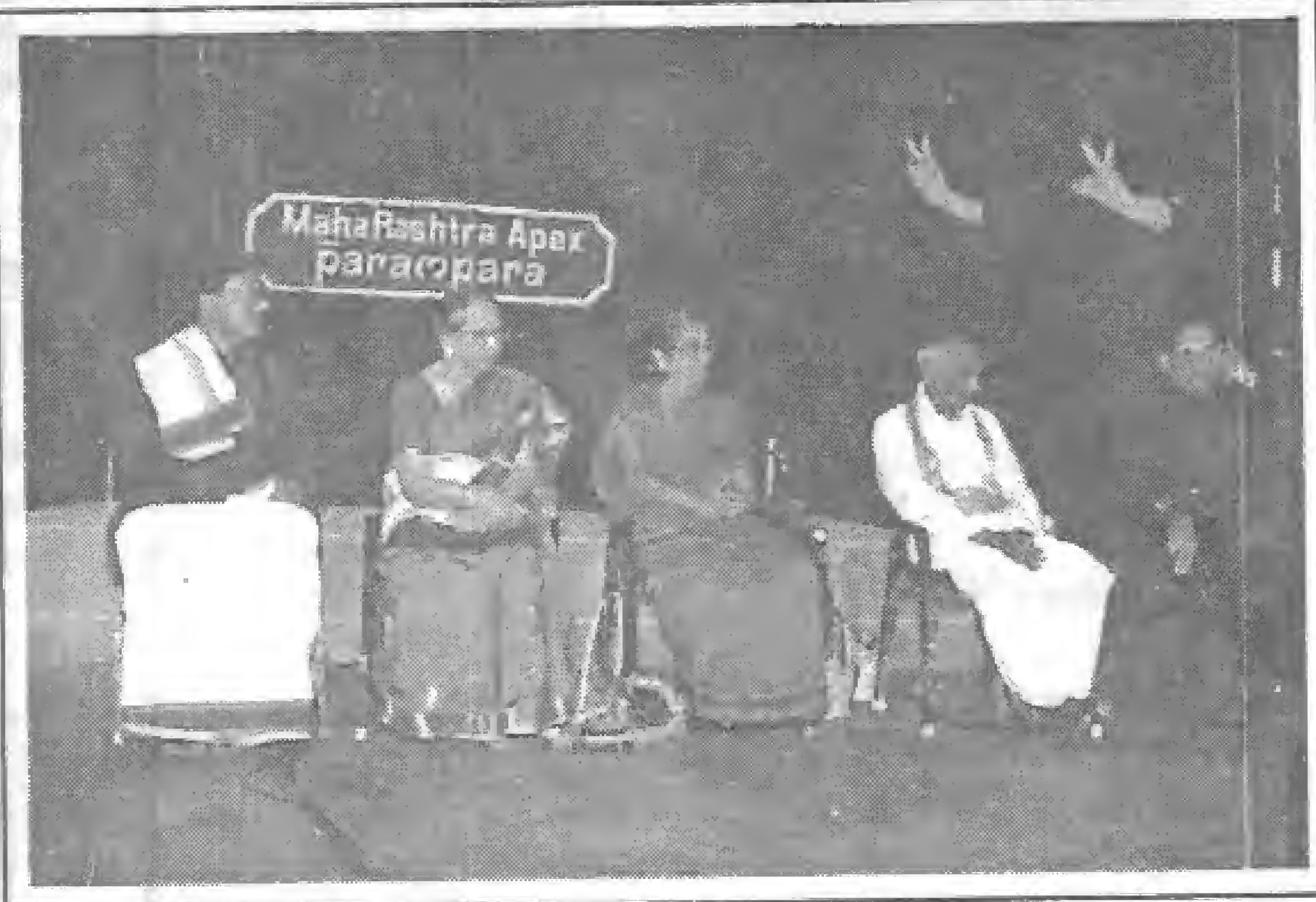
**December 28 :** R.K. Padmanabha and D.V. Nagarajan (vocal), R. Dayakar (violin), N.G. Ravi (mridangam) and Omkar (ghata).

## PHOENIX

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# Nadaanta Falls in Line



Artistes themselves organising festivals of music and dance seem to have become the order of the day. Whatever the mode of the artiste, the fashion is to present a composite fare of the twin arts.

In recent times, the performing arena has seen regular performers like Pratibha Prahalad, Padmini Ravi, Purnima Ashok, the Kirans, Vyjayanti Kashi Salauddin Pasha, Nirupama-



rajendra, all dancers and Suma Sudheendra, Vasantha Madhavi, musicians, have all formed institutions of their own to promote not only their own chosen art form, but also throw open opportunities to fellow-artistes pursuing their allied arts to share the platform. Most of these artistes organise annual festivals which make way for exposure in both music and dance.

The latest to join the group is the Nadaanta Academy of Music and Dance. The brain behind this Academy is the couple T.V. Ramaprasad and Indira Kadambi, the husband an upcoming vocalist and the wife a seasoned Bharathanatyam dancer. Hence, it is only natural that their festivals cover both dance and music.

The Academy's festival last month was in a similar direction. But there was one difference and that is the absence of a recital by Indira herself, of course for entirely personal reasons. And that vacancy in dance was filled by the Kirans - Sandhya and Subramanyam.

ertoire of Bharathanatyam, the senior students of Padmini Ravi presented a feature entitled "Bhavya Rama Katha. As the title indicates, the idea was to draw on the mythological and spectacular appeals in the familiar saga of Rama.

But as the elucidation unfolded with the almost shop-soiled Swati Tirunal piece "Bhavayami Raghuramam" (ragamalika), one could not help suspecting about its sustaining character. To the relief of the discerning, the choreography turned out to be so taut and so imaginative, the couple changing roles with alacrity to maintain a steady tempo, that the impact was nearly total. One must add that the meaningful rendition of the familiar lines by Neela Ramanujam added to the punch and sparkle of the fare.

The popular Vidyabushana Teertha Swamiji was one of the attractions in the musical segment of the three-day festival. Though his forte is the devotionals comprising the celebrated 'Hari dasa padas', the Swamiji is no novice as a classical singer. His alap for Saveri (Bhubharamati) and



Doing away with the routine rep-



Pantuvrali (Aparama Bhakti) at once revealed a ringing flourish, though the form derived sustenance only from the kritis.

The devotionals in Kharaharapriya, Mohana and Amritavarshini were certainly more evocative, drawing repeated applause from the crowded house. B.U.Ganesh Prasad (violin), Ananthasubramaniam (mridangam) and Ranganath Chakravarti (ghatam) lent the Swamiji excellent support.

The other Carnatic vocalist featured in the festival was Ramaprasad himself. His concert, however, was preceded by a short function to felicitate two distinguished artistes, the nagenarian vocalist Thitte Krishna Iyengar of Mysore and Abhinaya exponent Kalanidhi Narayanan of Madras. A soulful Nagaswaram recital by the husband and wife duo S.P.Palanivel and Prabhadevi. Right from the customary salutation to Ganapati (Hamsadhvani), the duo revealed a varied repertoire, Dharmavati (Bhajanaseya) and Charukeshi (Adamodigalade) receiving an elaborate treatment. The confident way they went about developing the alapana and elucidated the kritis with sprightly Swaraprasthara, spoke for their astute performing skills. It was a lively fare.

As Ramaprasad intoned with a composition of Lalgudi Jayaraman in Mohana-Kalyani, it became evident that the youngster was in fine fettle. After reeling of ditties in Amritavahini (Sri Ramapadama) and Ahiri (Mayamma) in style, Prasad took up Kambodi (O Rangashayee) for a detailed alap. Though his voice in the upper reaches was a trifle unsure, the rendition of the stately Thyagaraja kriti was not short of its lyrical appeal, some sparkling 'sangatis' heightening its sensitivity. But in the 'swara' forays, the rendition could not conceal shades of Shankarabharana straying in. Also, as in Mohana-Kalyani earlier, the 'korvais' extended beyond their sustaining limits.

Veteran Umayalapuram Shivaraman who provided mridangam support was the cynosure among the accompanists, V.V.Ravi (violin) and T.V.Vasan (ghatam) completing the team. Right through the 90-minute fare, Shivaraman rollicked with his lively layakari, the 'Thani' for the Kambodi Adi tala piece reaching a crescendo to the delectation of the avid listeners. But Ravi certainly found himself in a low key.

The lone Hindustani artiste in the fare was Parameshwar Hegde, a senior disciple of Basavaraj Rajguru. In rollicking form, the sensitive vocalist opened with a leisurely alap for Maru-Behag. With lingering meends and resonant tonality, he explored the depths of the melody, decorative 'sargams' investing its overtones. Audav Bageshri that followed was harnessed to as sprightly a mood, Parameshwar enriching the portrayal with a wide array of bol-taans in the Antara.

It was pleasant listening, a Bhajan "Janama Janamaki Das" lending a lilt to it. Seasoned Ravindra Yavagal on the tabala and Vyasamirthy Katti on the harmonium complemented the vocalist's aesthetic sensitivities.

Chandrasekhar

## Naadanta

Naadanta Academy of Dance and Music was founded in 1989, by T.V. Ramprasad and Indira Kadambi, to impart education in music and dance. A Trust was formed in 1995 with the objective of expanding the activities of the Academy from teaching to propagating music and dance and organising festivals. The Academy is organising work shops by eminent teachers in the field of music and dance for the benefit of the artiste in Karnataka. It plans to propagate music and dance through production of audio

cassettes, compact discs and video cassettes and distributing them world over. The Academy which had conducted 'Arohana' and 'Parampara' festivals in 1995, is conducting classes at Rajajinagar, Vijayanagar and J.P.Nagar.

## T.V. Ramprasad

T.V. Ramprasad is a young vocalist from Karnataka who is making rapid strides in the field of Carnatic Music. T.V. Ramprasad was trained under illustrious teachers like R.R.Keshavamurthy, T.V. Gopalkrishnan and S.Rajam. Blessed with a melodious voice, T.V. Ramprasad has evolved his own unique style of singing, mixing both a lively approach and involvement, to heighten the mood of the listeners. T.V. Ramprasad is a regular AIR and Doordarshan and has performed in major organisations in the country. T.V. Ramprasad has toured the United Kingdom for concerts and workshops. T.V. Ramprasad is anchoring a programme of Carnatic music 'Saptha Swara' on Udaya T.V.

## Indira Kadambi

Indira Kadambi is a reputed Bharatanatyam danceuse of Karnataka. She has had the privilege of training under outstanding gurus, Usha Datar, Narmada and Kalanidhi Narayan. Precision of line and movement, combined with grace and fluidity could be seen in her performances. Her 'Abinaya' is subtle and suggestive and has been widely acclaimed. She has undergone training in Mohiniattam under Kalyanikuttiyamma. Indira's dance recitals have taken her to many parts of India and abroad. She has performed at the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, the Vasanta Habba, Nishagandhi festival, South Central Zone Cultural Centre's festivals and performances in different places in Europe. Indira is an empanelled artiste of the Indian Coun-



oil for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi. Indira finds time from her busy performance schedule to train youngsters, at Nrityagram, where taught Bharatanatyam for three years, and at the academy.

Indira is a good Nattuvanar, too, having received advanced training under Kamala Rani of Kalakshetra, Madras. Indira is well versed in the allied arts of music and literature.

## Maha Rashtra Apex Corporation Ltd

The festival Maha Rashtra Apex PARAMPARA was sponsored by Maha Rashtra Apex Corporation, a leading financial services company. The Company is a member of the reputed Manipal Group. Established in 1943, and headed by T. Ramesh. U. Pai, Chairman is ably assisted by Sri

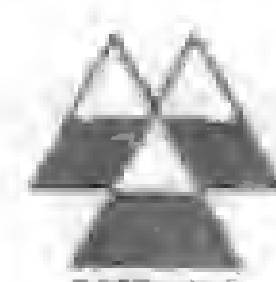
T. Sudhakar Pai, Managing Director, his eldest son.

The company has diversified activities like Hire Purchase, Leasing, Deposits, Bill Discounting and Money Changing. The Deposits of the company has crossed the Rs. 1900 million. The Company is

proud to enjoy the confidence of more than 1.20 lakh depositors, spread over 65 branches in 10 states. It plans to increase its net work of branches to 70 by the end of the financial year 1995-96. The company has been paying an uninterrupted dividend for 52 years and has declared a dividend of 30% for the year ended 31st March 1995. The company has had 4 Bonus Issues and 7 Rights Issues in the past. The company's shares are listed on the Stock exchanges of Bombay, Pune, Bangalore and Mangalore.

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# Raga Vishleshana - Hindola



*Ratnamma Keshavamurthy, Bangalore Venkatram, G.R. Jaya and Uma Gopalaswamy at Raga Vishlesana Programme*

In the "Raga Vishleshana" series organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore Vidushi Rathnamma Keshavamurthy of Shimoga gave a vintage vocal recital commencing with a Varna "Ninnenammi-yunnanura". She attributed the piece to Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar. Though the name occurs it is not so. She rendered "Padmanabha Pahi" of Swati Tirunal and "Samagana Lolane" of Sivan and rounded off with a Vachana. Basavangudi G. Nataraj and N. Amruth provided the violin and mridangam support.

Earlier, the raga vishleshana was conducted by Bangalore K. Venkataram assisted by Uma Gopalaswamy and G.R. Jaya (vocal) and G. Nataraj (violin). Venkataram explained that there is no raga by name Hindola in Hindustani music; Hindol and Hindoli do not resemble Hindola. Hindustani raga Malkauns does.

Hindola is an Oudava Vakra Sanchara upanga raga; rishabha and panchama varjya. Sadharana gandhara, shudha madhyama, shudha daivatha and kaishiki nishadha are the assigned swaras. There is a pataanthara for the krithi, "Manasuloni Marmamu"

of Thyagaraja rendered with chatusruthi daivatha. S m g m d n s - S n d m g s are prescribed texts (Sangraha Choodamani of Govindacharya, Sangeetha Swaramruthi in Telugu, Sangeetha Kalanidhi of Tachur Singrathar, Gayaka Siddhanjanam of Tachur Brothers, Karunamrutha Sagara of Abraham Pandith, Sangeetha Chandrike of Salem Manicka Mudaliar and Veena Seshanna). Mahabharatha Choodamani prescribes "S g m d n s - S n d m g s" extensively used in contemporary concert music. 'S m g m' in Arohana is the Vakra Sanchara.

There are 12 ragas commencing with Hindola like Hindola Darbar, Hindola Saranga, Hindola Vasantha without any semblance of Hindola. As per the text book of the Department of Education, Mysore Government in 1973 prescribed for proficiency examinations authored by Thitte Krishna Iyengar, this is a janya of 8th Mela Hanuma Thodi.

A sloka describing the swaras of Hindola was rendered by Uma Gopalaswamy. Shantha - Deena - Karuna rasas noticed while Jaru and kampitha gamakas are used in vilamba

kala was exhibited by singing "Neerajakshi Kamakshi". Veera-Adbhutha rasas noticed while Vareku Janti and Daatu swara gamaka prayogas in Duritha Kala were exhibited by singing "Sujana manoratha poorana chature" by G.R. Jaya.

Compositions known in Hindola were explained. Lakshana Geetha (Sangraha Choodamani) was rendered by Rathnamma Keshavamurthy. A geetha of Venkatamukhi in Jhampe. Varnas, "Swami ninne kori" in adi was rendered by G.R. Jaya and "Rammanave" of Ramaswamy Dikshithar on Thyagaraja in Ata by Uma Gopalaswamy. Another Varna was "Ninne Nammiyunnenura". Krithis are Samajavaragamana and Manasuloni of Thyagaraja, Neerajakshi Kamakshi and Govardhana Gireesham of Dikshithar, Padmanabha Pahi of Swati Tirunal, Bhajare Gopalam of Sadashiva Brahmdra, Mamawatha Sri of Vasudevachar, Chintayami of Jyachamaraja Wadiyar, Karundaya of Vedanayakam Pillai, Samaganalolam of Sivan etc.

Sruthi Bhedha of academic interest was explained. Jaya rendered Shudha Saveri shifting tonic note from Gandhara while Uma rendered Udaya Ravicharika with shift tonic note from Madhyama. Natarajan (violin) played the scales of Mohana and Madhyamavathi by shifting tonic notes from Daivatha and Nishadha respectively.

## Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha

Jan 4, 97: T.N. Seshagopalan (vocal), Mysore Nagaraj (violin) and Praveen (mridangam).

January 11, 97, 6 pm: S.Nithya-shree Mahadevan and party (vocal).



# RADEL's Tala Mala LT -15



Y.K. Muddukrishna, Director of Kannada and Culture releasing the Tala mala LT-15

**T**aalamala LT 15, an electronic tabla for light music was released by Y.K. Muddukrishna, Director of Kannada and Culture, on November 9, 96 at Bangalore by switching on the unit.

Muddukrishna described it as a wonderful development and an unique contribution to the field of music particularly the light music.

He was happy that "such a genius is amongst us". and the State Government identified the talent of Raj Narayan, the inventor of the system by conferring the 'Rajyotsava Award' this year.

Muddukrishna felt that the Talamela would be very useful for school and college students while teaching light music and wished Raj Narayan succeeded in innovating more such instruments.

Eminent scientist and former Union Minister, Raja Ramanna noted

that the instruments are reaching maturity and said that the whole world is using modern technology in music, though the development has not reached that stage.

Light music exponent, C. Ashwath hoped that Raj Narayan would produce a compact electronic harmonium, easy to carry and wished for the success of his projects.

Noted Hindustani musician, Vinayak Torvi, said that Radel Electronics has contributed a lot to the cause of music and in the process he has created a guru in the Talamela LT15.

Earlier, Raj Narayan, Director of Radel Electronics (P) Ltd, who introduced the Talamela LT15, claimed that the function was a blend of tradition, culture and technology.

Briefing on the establishment he said that the unit was set up near Bangalore with an investment of Rs

50 lakh with the assistance of Karnataka State Finance Corporation. All the equipments produced are indegenously designed and implemented. He said renowned artistes heralded as a breakthrough and informed that he has plans to bring out new products.

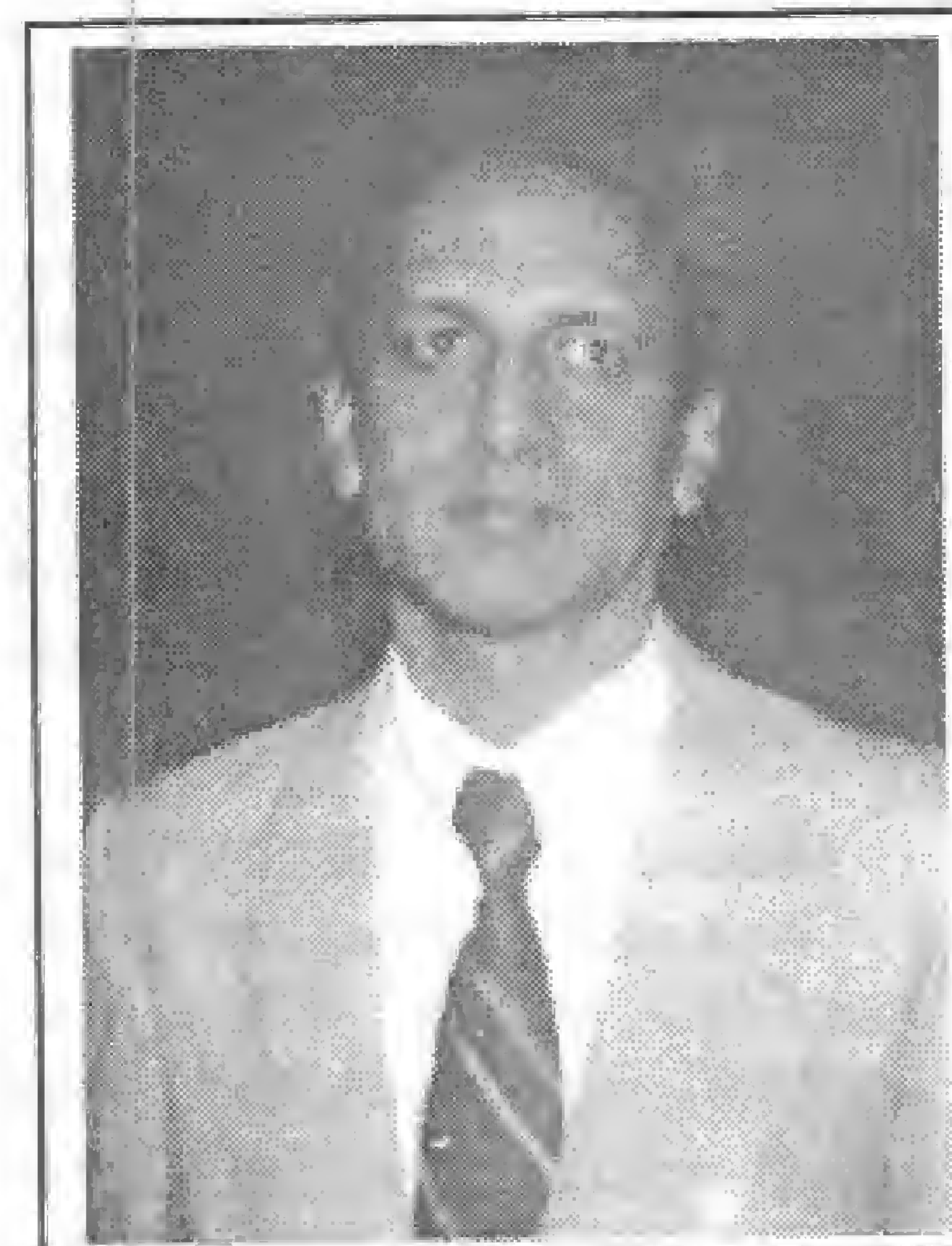
Later Malavika Raj Narayan, Bhamini Seshadri, Soumya and Dev sang with the help of the Talmela LT 15.

Radel Electronic Pvt Ltd is known for its innovative electronic musical instruments for Indian classical music. They are:

## Electronic Tabla

G. Rajnarayanan has blended them into a movable maestro - the electronic tabla. Known as Taalmala, which produces the actual sound of the tabala is ideal for use during practice sessions.

The Taalmala produces the theka (rhythmic sounds of the table) for the various commonly used Hindustani taals such as ek taal, teen taal, jhap taal, rupak, dadra, deepchandi, keherwa, ada cahutal, jhoomra etc. It is simple to use, having controls for



G. Raja Narayan



volume, pitch (sruthi), speed and a balance control for relative volumes of the left hand (bayan) and right hand (dayan) sounds. Selection of various taals are made through a calculator-type keyboard which also has 'start' and 'stop' keys. Various laya ranges, such as dhruti vilambit and ati vilambit can also be set to obtain any desired speed range. Within any of these ranges, the speed is continuously adjustable through a knob. The instrument automatically inserts additional bols (sounds) for true-to-life accompaniment.

The instrument is compact and portable. It can operate on AC mains (220 V or 110 V) as well as batteries. It is designed around a Z80 microprocessor. Bols are represented by numerical codes which are deciphered by the microprocessor. The whole process of producing the bols in a cyclic rhythmic manner is pre-programmed into the memory. A 2K ROM (with provision to be extended to 4K) is provided.

### Tabala goes Electronic with Taalmala

The electronics age has entered the citadel of Hindustani music with the advent of Taalmala, the electronic table. The ingenious instrument was presented for a critical appraisal before an audience of musicians, music students and music critics by its inventor Mr Rajanarain of Bangalore.

His lecture-demonstrations have drawn a bigger audience than live performances.

Rajanarayan, who devised the two instruments has achieved something worthy of a government research unit. And his Bangalore-based Radel Systems is manufacturing and marketing these electronic classics.

Radel Electronics Pvt. Ltd. is known for its innovative electronic musical instruments for Indian Classical music, electronic tambura 'Saarang', the electronic sruthi box

'Dhruva', electronic tabala 'Taalmala', electronic lehera 'Sunadamala' and the 'Talameter', an electronic taala aid.

G. Rajanarayan, one of the founders of the company, is the inventor of these revolutionary products, which are unique for their technological features and have been invented by an electronics engineer who is also a performing musician. Rajanarayan is an accomplished flautist, A-grade artiste of AIR and has performed on Doordarshan too.

Most artistes of Carnatic and Hindustani classical music use this instrument. After launching the 'Sunadamala' electronic lehera (an electronic instrument that plays 150 preset tunes in 19 different taala of Hindustani music), Pandit Ravi Shankar said, "Perhaps you will soon have my concert with just a photograph of me and your electronic instrument performing!"

### Glorious Hampi Festival

A three day cultural festival 'Utsav 96' was organised at Hampi, the cultural capital of the erstwhile Vijayanagar Empire, from November 3, 96 by the State Government in association with the Government of India.

Chief Minister, J.H. Patel, the chief guest, was accorded the *poorna kumbha swagatha*. He inaugurated the festival by offering pooja to Goddess Bhuvane-shwari.

The inaugural concert was by Gangubai Hangal, noted Hindustani vocalist. Kunkum Mohanti and troupe presented an Odissi dance ballet.

Kuchipudi exponent, Manju Bhargavi presented a Kuchipudi dance ballet. Suma Sudhindra of Bangalore presented a Pancha Veena concert. A

dance ballet, Sri Virupaksha, was presented by Suma Vijay.

Kadri Gopalnath gave a memorable Saxophone concert and Sangeetha Katti a Hindustani vocal. Punya Theertha Bharat, was presented by Yuvak Biradari from Bombay.

Lakshmi Gopalaswamy of Bangalore presented a Bharatanatyam recital to be followed by Talavadya, by H.P. Ramachar's Karnataka Mahila Layamadhuri.

Ministers M.P. Prakash, H.D. Revanna and Leeladevi R. Prasad actively participated in the festival which ended on November 5 with a colourful procession of folk artistes and display of fire works.

### Workshop: An Enlightening Experience

A 15-day workshop conducted by Guru C. Radhakrishna and organised by the State Sangeetha Nruthya Academy along with the South Central Cultural Zone to propagate the style of Guru Kolar Kittanna imparted to 20 interested students was rewarding. Some novel items not usually performed, including the Poorva Ranga, the Thaaya, the Prabhandha and the Swara Pallavi were the highlight.

The workshop culminated in a performance at the Bangalore Gayana Samaj where the students presented the items learnt at the workshop. Senior disciples of Guru Radhakrishna, Veena Sridhar, and Roopa Vijay presented a few other numbers creditably. The most interesting piece was the Navarasa presented by Veena Sridhar.

Guru Radhakrishna in his nattuvangam was supported by Chandrashekhar on the vocal and K.C. Ashwathanaraya on the flute.

Manu Vijay



Tuneful Encounters - 10

# From Concert Hall to the Cricket Field

S.N.Sivaswamy

Come cricket season, my mind goes back to the early forties, All India Radio, Madras where I was working with colleagues many of whom shared my love for cricket. We used to cluster round a short - wave radio receiver listening to the inimitable A.F.S. Talyarkhan's one-man running commentary on the Quadrangular, later Pentangular cricket matches played at Bombay. (Of course, there was no T.V. as yet). We were a group of programmers, engineers and announcers, one of whom, V.S.Chakrapani, turned out to be an ace cricket commentator in later years.

And there was also a musician sitting with us, the young versatile S.Balachander the budding Veena maestro. Balachander was a few years younger than me, in fact a teenager. He was working in All India Radio as an instrumentalist when I joined there as a Programme Assistant. He was one of the child prodigies of those days, coming from a musical family. He was proficient in playing a number of musical instruments of various types. Besides the Veena, he played on Dilruba, Sitar, Tabla and many other instruments. He was the first artiste I knew who played "Tabla Tarang" the percussion ensemble with a difference. Indeed, his versatility amazed me as did the versatility of Mali, Balamurali, Rajeswara Rao, the other well known boy wonders of the musical world of that time.

Apart from music, Balachander was interested in a variety of other pursuits, books, sports, films ---. He had acted in a film, tailor made for

him, as the young Rishyashringar. The name of the film too was 'Rishyashringar' and I remember the sweet singing of the boy-hero in that film. Later, he was to himself direct an unusually intriguing film "Andanaal".

I often used to argue with Balachander that he should concentrate only on Veena instead of playing on too many instruments. In those days the great Karaikkudi Sambasiva Iyer was a regular performer on All India Radio, and listening to him, I had the feeling that Balachander was either influenced by him or had learnt Veena from him at some time or the other. My suggestion to Balachander was made in this light, but it appeared to displease him. He usually brushed it aside with the remark that I was hardly qualified to speak on instrumental music and did not know what I was talking about. Eventually I stopped annoying him with my comments, but by then we had stopped having any conversation on music, or any artistic matter at that.

One Saturday evening, however, I saw Balachander approaching my upstairs flat in Gopalapuram. It was the first time he was coming to our house and my wife and I were naturally surprised as well as pleased by this unexpected visit. I thought his visit must have something to do with our strained friendship quite unnecessarily fomented by my indiscreet comments. I waited for Balachander to break the ice and come to the subject so that we could shake hands and forget the affair.

As it happened, what had brought him to our house was not our quarrel which he seemed to have completely forgotten. You see, he had a cricket match to play that Sunday and he had come to borrow from me a pair of laundered white trousers for the occasion!

Along with the pair of pants I also gave him a piece of elderly advice, not to field in the slips and risk hurting his valuable fingers trying to catch hot chances from the batsmen.

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12/96



# Gangubai Opens Music School



*Gangubai Hangal who inaugurated the Ranganayaki Kalamandir seen with Jayalakshmi Inamdar, Pandit Seshadri Gawai and Surendra Dani*

**T**he art of Gamaka has its own lyrical appeal, projecting as it does the intricate texture of poetry. There is music in it, the composition being such that the ragas exemplify the lyrical essence. However, it is free from the rigid, stultifying mathematical conventions of Taala. That doesn't mean there is no laya. It is very much there and that is where its nearness to classical music is obvious.

Hence while it is not necessary that all Gamakis should be musicians, it is eminently desirable that all musicians are Gamakis! That will enhance the lyrical base of their rendition. Of course, there are quite a few who are competent in both the dispensations.

One such is Jayalakshmi Inamdar of Hubli. Though afflicted with polio early in life, the indefatigable artiste in her got the better of it by invigorating her creative faculties in making headway in the twin arts of Gamaka and music. Today she is one of the front-line artistes in the genre, qualifying herself as one recognised both in Gamaka and music circles.

Jayalakshmi inherited her interest in these arts from her father, Chikkappa

Shreshti. He had an abiding interest in music, literature and philosophy. This cultural backdrop invigorated Jayalakshmi's inherent talent. She consolidated it by learning veena under G.V.Ranganayakamma and vocal under Srinivasa Iyengar, both veterans in their respective arts. She received her training in Gamaka from N.Aswathanarayana, poet Devarsa Kulkarni having been her mentor in philosophy.

Equipped thus, Jayalakshmi's recitals in music and gamaka are marked for their lyricism and meaningful articulation of underlying words and ideas. No wonder reputed organisations like the Karnataka Gamaka Kala Parishat, Dharwad District Gamaka Kala Parishat, Manjappa Heggade Centenary Celebrations Committee, Kumaravyasa Seva Sangha, Hubli, Chitradurga District Gamaka Sammelana have felicitated her on her contribution to the art. The latest is the annual award (1995) of the State Sangeeta-Nruthya Academy.

Jayalakshmi, at the instance of her friends and admirers, has now shifted over to Bangalore. Her school of art,

named Ranganayaki Kalamandira at 'Devatashree' Jain Temple Street, Visveswarapuram was inaugurated by Dr.Gangubai Hangal, the noted Hindustani Vocalist in the presence of dignitaries like Chandrabhaga Devi, Chairman, State Sangeet Nritya Academy, Pandit Seshadri Gawai and Surendra Dani, a senior journalist of Hubli..

Jayalakshmi explained that in order to facilitate all sections of society to learn the art of music and gamaka, the fee is kept at the minimum. Besides vocal in both the Hindustani and Carnatic styles, arrangements are made to impart training in a variety of instruments like the violin, veena, sitar, flute and harmonium. Mridangam and tabla are also taught by competent teachers and the training covers from the primary to the graduate level.■

## Wedding Bells

**Mysore V Subramanya**, great grandson of Veene Seshanna and the Secretary of Karnataka Ganakala Parishat married **Savithri** on November 17, 96 at Mysore.

Many close friends attended the wedding.

PHOENIX wishes the couple a long and happy married life.

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## Know Your Artistes

A.P.Rao

**T.S.Vasantha  
Madhavi**

Traditional vocalist, T.S. Vasantha Madhavi is a disciple of Ganakalanidhi D. Subbaramaiah.

Born in the family of musicians, her father, Srinivasa Murthy was a great lover of music and mother Rangalakshmi is a renowned vocalist. Her grand mother, Subbalakshmi was also a vocalist.

She started learning music from an early age of five and continued for more than 15 years and passed Vidwat examination with distinction.

As a performer and a staunch follower of tradition she has achieved authenticity in rendering musical compositions. Her concerts are notable for due stress on the usage of gamaka and rendering raga with full of bhava and varieties of rare sanchara. She has her own style of alapana, neraval and taana singing.

Vasantha Madhavi is a graded artiste of AIR and is performing all over the country for over three decades. She is an approved composer in AIR, Bangalore and has directed many AIR and TV programmes.

'Lakshmi Vandana', 'Shakti Sthuthi', 'Cauveri' and 'Ganesha Janana', are some of the popular programmes produced by her for Doordarshan. She has directed and composed music for a number of 'Navasuma' songs for AIR Bangalore.

Several varnas and navasandhi krithis have been composed by her for Bharatanatya concerts. A set of Navagraha kritis composed by her in Sanskrit are being presented by many musicians. Her Ashta Deepika kritis exhibit scholarly knowledge and insight of Sanskrit vedic version.

Vasantha Madhavi has conducted several workshops on Saint Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshithar and Kamalamba Navavarna kritis. She has presented several papers on various music subjects and has conducted lecture demonstration programmes.

She has written a number of articles on interesting aspects of music for music magazines.

Vasantha Madhavi has given concerts in Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Karnataka Gana kala Parishat and Vivek Cultural Centre, Madras.

She is the founder and managing trustee of Sri D Subbaramaiah Fine Arts Trust which is doing yeomen service to the cause of music. As the principal of Rangasree college of music, Vasantha Madhavi is training many promising students.

Vasantha Madhavi, who is a graduate in Science from Bangalore University, is married to H.M. Keshava Murthy, an Electronics Engineer and has a daughter, Srivardhini, an upcoming vocal artiste.

*T.S. Vasantha Madhavi*  
75 'Pallavi' /th cross, ITI Layout,  
J.P.Nagar, I Phase, Bangalore  
5 50078 ☎ 6646089

**H.K. Nagaraja**

Young Hindustani vocalist, Hanumanthappa Kadaramand Algi Nagaraja was born in 1966 in a family of music connoisseurs. He learnt initially from S.L. Venugopal, a staff artiste of AIR. Later he had advanced training from renowned maestro Pandit Basavaraj Rajguru for seven years. After the death of Rajguru, Nagaraja is being guided by Chandrashekar Puranikmath and M. Venkatesh Kumar.

A degree holder in English History and master's degree in music of Karnataka University, Dharwar, Nagaraj is the recipient of Karnatak Sangeetha Nrithya Academy's scholarship for three years. He is a 'B' high grade vocal artiste of AIR Dharwar.

Nagaraj has participated and won prizes in a number of music competitions to name a few are: First prize in All India P&T Cultural meet, Hyderabad, Second prize for 'gazal' at All India College Youth Cultural Festival, Panaji; represented Karnatak University in South Zone Youth Festival, Madurai Kamaraj University; won prizes in 6th Yuva Sangeetha Nrithya Mahotsava organised by South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur



and a first prize in Thamankur Memorial Music Competition, Academy of performing Arts Hubli.

Nagaraj has developed a fine melodious style of singing. His creative mood and clear vision of sound musical knowledge have given him considerable recognition among upcoming artistes. He is of late giving concerts all over the country. His concert at the annual music festival 'Parampara' in memory of Pandit Basavaraj Rajguru in August this year attracted appreciation from music lovers of Bangalore.

Nagaraj is a part time music lecturer in a college at Dharwar.

*H.K.Nagaraj  
C/o. K.J.Shah, 12, Navodaya  
Nagar, 15th Cross,  
Dharwar 580008*

### Uma Gopalaswamy



Till recently, doctorates in music and other fine arts were mostly honoris causa or gratia. With the introduction of music and dance in the university curriculum, more and more graduates in the faculty have started qualifying for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Bangalore University itself has among its alumnus quite a few doctorates in music.

The latest addition to that distinguished list is Uma Gopalaswamy, a leading Carnatic vocalist both on and off the AIR, where she is graded 'A'.

Gifted with a pleasant voice, Uma is a senior student of the renowned vocalist and preceptor R.K.Srikantan. Even in her collegiate studies she had taken music for her optionals, eventually taking her Master's degree in music. Uma has given concerts for almost all the leading music organisations all over the State and in Madras. The Madras Music Academy has given its award as 'The best demonstrator' in one of its annual conferences.

Uma's subject for the doctoral thesis was "A Study of SANGEETA SAMPRADAYA PRADARSHINI, an ancient treatise on the subject. Her guide was Dr.Padma Murthy, Professor of Music (Rtd)., Department of Performing Arts, Bangalore University.

### R.Dayakar



Violinist R.Dayakar (35) was initiated to music by his parents D. Ramu and Shankaraleelamma. He had initial training under H.T. Puttaswamachar and later with K.J. Venkateshachar of Mysore. Violin vidwan H.K. Narasimha Murthy, staff

artiste of AIR, provided him the advance training.

Narasimha Murthy helped Dayakar to establish as an accomplished accompanist.

Dayakar has won several awards during his college days in international University competitions and festivals. He has accompanied many veteran musicians of repute in all the leading sabhas of the country.

He was conferred with the title "Surmani" from Sursingar cultural organisation of Bombay. He toured Switzerland on invitation from Keshava Sangeetha Nrithya Academy.

He has good skill as a accompaniment artoste. He is an accomplished artiste with good fingering technique

Dayakar is the A-grade artiste and a staff artiste of AIR, Bhadravathi.

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# Yakshagana in New Garb



The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Bangalore Centre celebrated the 95th birthday of the renowned Kannada litterateur, Dr K. Shivarama Karanth with a week-long festival of his version of Yakshagana 'Prasangas'.

Though the folk theatre which has flourished in the coastal Karnataka for centuries is nothing new to the City theatre-goer, it was for the first time that a whole gamut of his creations with the new look was being presented here. That by itself was an event to rave about.

The presence of that multi-faceted personality on the concluding day of the festival, added colour and gaiety to the celebrations. The occasion was doubly significant as the Bhavan took the opportunity to felicitate the creative genius. Besides his latest book entitled "Matina Sethuve", a publication of the Bhavan was released on the occasion.

The book is a translation of letters in English exchanged between Mahatma Gandhi and his benevolent

industrialist friend G.D. Birla and the members of his family. The book under its English title, "Bridge of Words" had impressed Karanth so much that he wanted to translate it into Kannada. The Bhavan readily agreed to publish it and it was in the fitness of things that Sarladevi Birla, daughter-in-law of Ghanshamdas, personally released the work which is undoubtedly a valuable addition to Gandhian literature in Kannada.

Besides these two eminent personalities, C. Subramaniam, the President of the Bhavan, S. Ramakrishnan, its energetic Executive Director, and B.K. Birla, the illustrious son of the famed industrialist, graced the occasion. E.S. Venkataramiah, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, who is the chairman of the local Kendra, presided over the colourful function.

During the week beginning October 1, as many as seven Prasangas were enacted by the artistes of Karanth's Yakshagana Kendra of

Udupi. As is the wont, mythology and spectacle inexorably held away on the audience in the packed Kincha Auditorium day after day.

Even as the curtains went up on the opening production, Nala-Damayanti, it was evident that the age-old style is shorn of many of its crudities in almost all the departments of production.

Firstly, the music ensemble which usually occupied the centre stage, the Bhagavata verily playing the role of a conductor, is shifted to the wings as in a classical dance recital. The screeching voice of the singers is mellowed down to render the diction clear and coherent. The musical spectrum is widened to include a wider variety of ragas, the tonality in each case articulating the emotional demands in the sequence.

The inclusion of a violin and saxophone enhanced the melodic overtones of the score, obviously directed by the seasoned violinist A.V. Krishnamachar (Padmacharan) who himself dominates the orchestral effects on the violin.

The emphasis on the clarity in the rendition becomes imperative in the absence of the dialogue that usually helped identifying each character. True, often the players would indulge in extempore dialogue on matters of contemporary relevance. Relevant as the form was used as a medium of mass communication. It is these references that excited the rural populace which sat through the night to witness the plays, similar to the "Theru Koothu" of Tamilnadu, "Veedhi Natakam" of Andhra, "Nautanki" of West Bengal and "Tamasha" of Maharashtra. Whatever, the rural folk



and the traditionists have not taken kindly to the change.

On the positive side, the new form assumes a sophistication which approximates with the ballet. But the Nritta part of the dance movement is retained with all its variegated 'angikas', 'utplavanas', 'bhramaris' and suggestive footwork in tact. The costuming is equally suggestive and as rich and colourful as in the original form to the point of portraying Rama,

Lakshmana and Sita under banishment in all regalia !

Some of these innovations have resulted in reasonably reducing the play time, mostly not exceeding 120 minutes. That is a factor which makes the form eminently acceptable to the urban elite. What is more, it has widened its popular appeal, a factor which cannot be ignored by the most ardent votary of the traditional !

Chander

## Rewarding Experience

A ten day music workshop on Dasara Padagalu was conducted by R.K. Srikantan at the Lalitha Kala Academy, Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, Bangalore from November 1, 96.

T.S. Satyavathi, a senior disciple of Srikantan made a fervent appeal to the participants to make good use of the opportunity of learning the renowned master. She praised Srikantan for his scholarship and learning with full of concern for his well being.

'It is not just learning a few songs but a way of life which the students would do well to imbibe from the venerable master', she said and compared his knowledge of music to the ocean.

40 young and old men and women participated in this workshop. Manuscript notation written by Srikantan in his clear, neat hand was given to participants.

Nine compositions by different Dasaas were taught. Padams of Purandara Dasa, Kanaka Dasa, Vyasaraaya and Sreepadaraja in raagas of exquisite beauty like Mayamaalavagoula, Anandabhyravi,

Begada, Sree, Bhyravi, Mohana, Bilahari, Udayaravichandrika and Surati were were taught.

Nine Dasara padas are nine gems, each a work of art set in a raga eminently suited to the bhava of the sahitya. The essence of the raaga is brought out unmistakable in the very first few lines of the pada.

Srikantan explained the context and meaning of the words and phrases. He clarified as to why certain lines or passages should be sung only in a particular way for best results. Words, context and the mood set the pace and the style of the song.

The ragas are chosen with particuoar care keeping in mind the chandas of the pada. The pada can make an impact only if it is sung in the authentic raga in the correct kala pramana. The words of the padas are colloquial expressions of daily use. But the wisdom and philosophy of life contained in them can reach the hear of the listener only if they are sung in the way they sould be sung. ■

Kusuma Rao

## State Artistes make a mark in Kuchipudi Fete

Nehru Kendra and the Kuchipudi Kala Kendra had jointly organised a national festival of Kuchipudi in Mumbai recently.

The three day ustav starting on October 11 covered almost all facets of the art from solo to ballet and included a seminar on music for Kuchipudi, lecture cum demonstration on all the topics.

The demonstration covered all the classical dance forms that originated in Andhra Pradesh: Kuchipudi, Yakshagana, Andhra Natyam, Melattur Bhagavata Mela, Vilasini Natyam etc. For the benifit of participating artistes critics from parts of the country took part in a seminar.

The two artistes who represented Karnataka were Manju Bhargavi, who along with Rattaiah Sharma of Kuchipudi village presented a masterly 'Bhama Kalapam' in the demonstration sessions and Vyjayanthi Kashi who presented a solo. The latter presented 'Urvashi Shapa Vimochanam' and 'Kukutha Sabdam', both new pieces. They were acclaimed almost the highlight of the festival.

## Mahadevan Passes Away

Morching vidwan, Pudukkottai Mahadevan died on October 23. Mahadevan who was an auto parts dealer was running a hotel at Tiruchirapalli.

Recipient the title, Kalaimamani from the Government of Tamilnadu, he is survived by his wife, two daughters and one son.



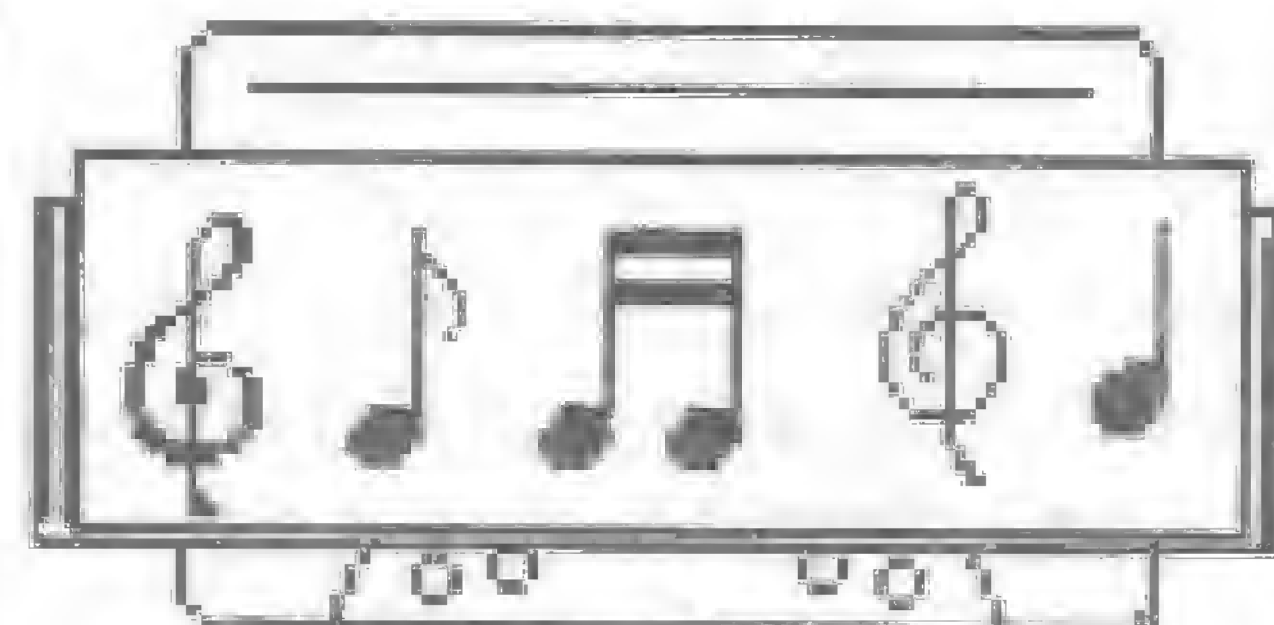
**Purandhara Pancha Ratna Mala:** Produced and distributed by Vidwan B. Venkatappa Sangeeta Mahavidyalaya, 1 Cr, Satyanarayana, Bellary 583 103. Rs 30/-.



There can hardly be any musician or music-lover worth the name who is not familiar with the Pancha Ratna Kriti of Saint Thyagaraja. They are unparalleled in their musical perception. But here is a similar set of kritis entitled 'Sri Purandhara Pancha Ratna Mala'. The label itself is intriguing as no such kritis are attributed to the Dasavarenya. That is irrefutable. Equally undeniable is the fact that the five Kannada lyrics rendered in this cassette are his own. Only the musical structure is different, adopting as it does the pattern familiarised by Thyagaraja. And that is the creation of almost an obscure musician, Subhadramma Venkatappa, a violin vidwan of the Vidwan B Venkatappa Sangeetha Maha Vidyalaya, Bellary.

As one listens to the five compositions, preceded by the Saint's masterly Sri Gananatha in Malahari, one can only marvel at the genius of this unpretentious musician. The choice of the kritis is such that each blends itself to the structural demands of a 'pancha ratna'. The rendition, rightly in the form of a chorus, led by V. Kalavati with Meenakshi Ravi and Dhanya Ravi, is as impressive. B. Raghuram (violin) and N.G. Ravi

## Cassette



## Causerie

(mridangam) have complemented the vocal refrain adequately. But the title card falls short in its artistic perspectives.

**Palinchu Kamakshi:** (Carnatic Vocal) by M.S. Sheela. Hamsadhwani Audio, 5, 3rd Cross, 1 Main, Maruthi Extension, Bangalore 560021. Rs 38/-



The standing of M.S. Sheela in Carnatic music today is indisputable. She is well-known both in the classical and light classical variations. Already many of her cassettes in both the dispensations have become hot favourites with music buffs. Her rendition of the erstwhile world of 'slokas' propitiating the entire pantheon of Indian god-heads have run into more than one edition.

Here is one more cassette of hers under the new banner Hamsadhwani Audio. It is a choice collection of compositions, each of a reputed mas-

ter. Starting with the familiar Shahana vernam of Veena Kupier (Karunimpa), it runs in the popular concert pattern with ditties in Bilahari, Jayamanohari, Purvi Kalyani, Madhyamavati, a Devaranama in Sindhu Bhairavi and a Thillana (Hameer Kalyani).

The title has its relevance as the focus is on the alap for Madhyamavati preceding the celebrated shyama Sastry kriti. With relevant stasis on Madhyam and Nishad, the portrayal of the piece grows into a proportional representation with chiselled 'sangatis' and a heat 'swara koravai'.

The other kritis in the selection are as evocative, an experienced team of accompanists of Nalina Mohan (violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (mridangam) and Ravi Kumar (ghatam) adding to their aural enrichment.

**Haridasa Namana** (Dasara Padas) A Compendium Volume Offered by Hamsadhwani Audio. Rs 33.

Here again, Sheela in her mellifluous voice renders some well-known and some less-known compositions of the saint-singers of Karnataka. The musical score in each case underscores the modal fervour of the composition. In all there are eight songs, four of Purandhara Dasa, Vyasaraya and one each of Vadiraja and Vijayadasa. An ideal way of paying homage to the hallowed saint-composers.





## Dk's Dance Comes Alive

Seeing some young dancers of South Kanara and its environs dance in the Akhila Karnataka Nritya Sammelana organised by the Karnataka Nrityakala Parishath at Udupi in the last week of October, it became evident that the much-vaunted cry in some quarters to "take fine arts to the rural areas" was purely politically motivated.

The pick in the three-day fare, spread over six sessions was Aparna Samaga, student of Mohan Kumar Ullal. From the initial pushpanjali itself she was able to carry conviction. The jatiswaram (ragamalika) continued her grasp of the grammar, all the attractive aspects of the art getting the due emphasis.

The familiar Natakuranji Varnam revealed a glimpse of her abhinaya which was much above average. There was a studied approach in the use of hasthas and facials. That was indeed talent that deserves to be watched.

Equally impressive was the group dance choreographed by Chandrasekhar Navada for the invocatory. The young girls revealed liveliness unusual in beginners. Bramara, who demonstrated for her Guru K.B. Madhava Rao was equally sprightly, revealing neat lines and trite thattu - mettu.

But Navada's another student, Shobha Bhat seemed to be carried away by a superficial delight. Lakshmi Gururaj, student of Sandhya Rao was no better, though her sense of rhythm was sharp.

Preeti Pai of Shimoga, a student of Geeta Datar, had shown promise in her Arangetram some time ago. But her matrix in this outing revealed too much on visually attractive elements and lost credibility. The whole thing lacked depth.

The climax in the festival reached as Lakshmi Gopalaswamy danced. The pretty dancer, her mother Uma singing the words and Guru Narmada

wielding the cymbals, was in her elements, executing the bill with utmost confidence and understanding. The Thodi Varnam (Maye Mayan of T.N.Krishnan) stood out for its well wrought nritta, though the overly bhakti sentiment saw her facials all though in a supplicating mood. But the popular Krishna Nee Begane brought her potential in the right perspective to the delectation of an appreciative audience.

The Parishath this year had selected Maya Rao for the prestigious "Nrityakala Shiromani" award. Maya is a worthy choice, as she is not only the best student of Sohan Lal who brought Kathak to Bangalore way back in 1939, but has revived it with her Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography.

Among the other eminent personalities honoured on the occasion was M.S. Natarajan, a pioneer in organising orchestral music for dance. As secretary of the State Sangeetha Nritya Academy in the sixties, he was instrumental in not only recognising many traditional activities, but organising inter-state cultural exchange programmes. He had also provided musical support to several international dancers of his day. **SNC**



M.S.Natarajan being honored at the festival



Maya Rao being honored at the festival

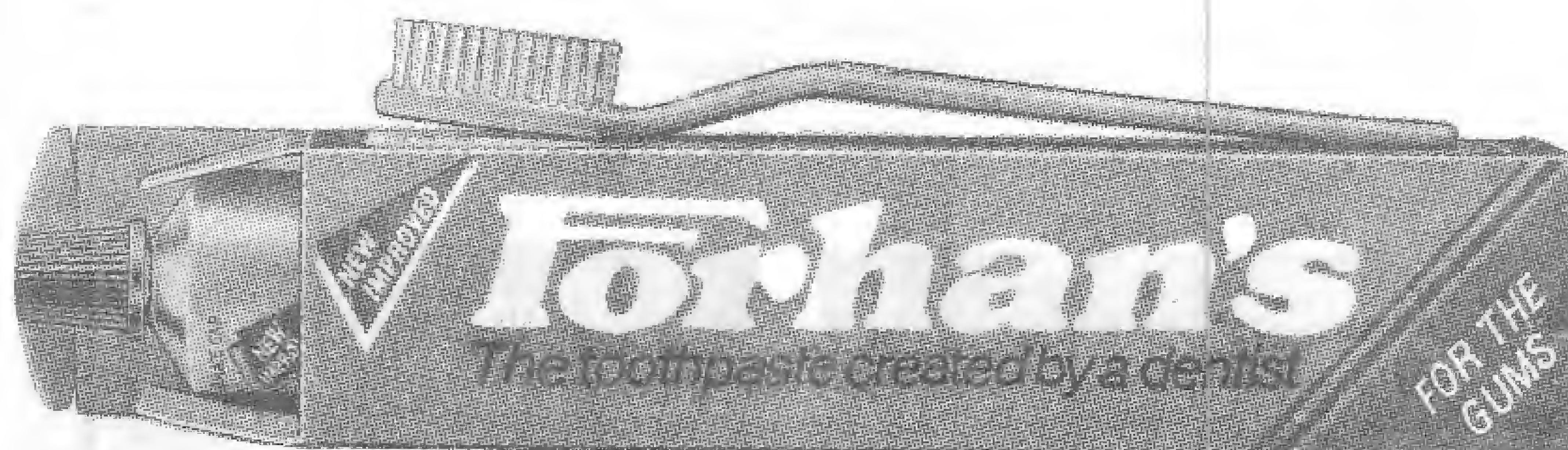


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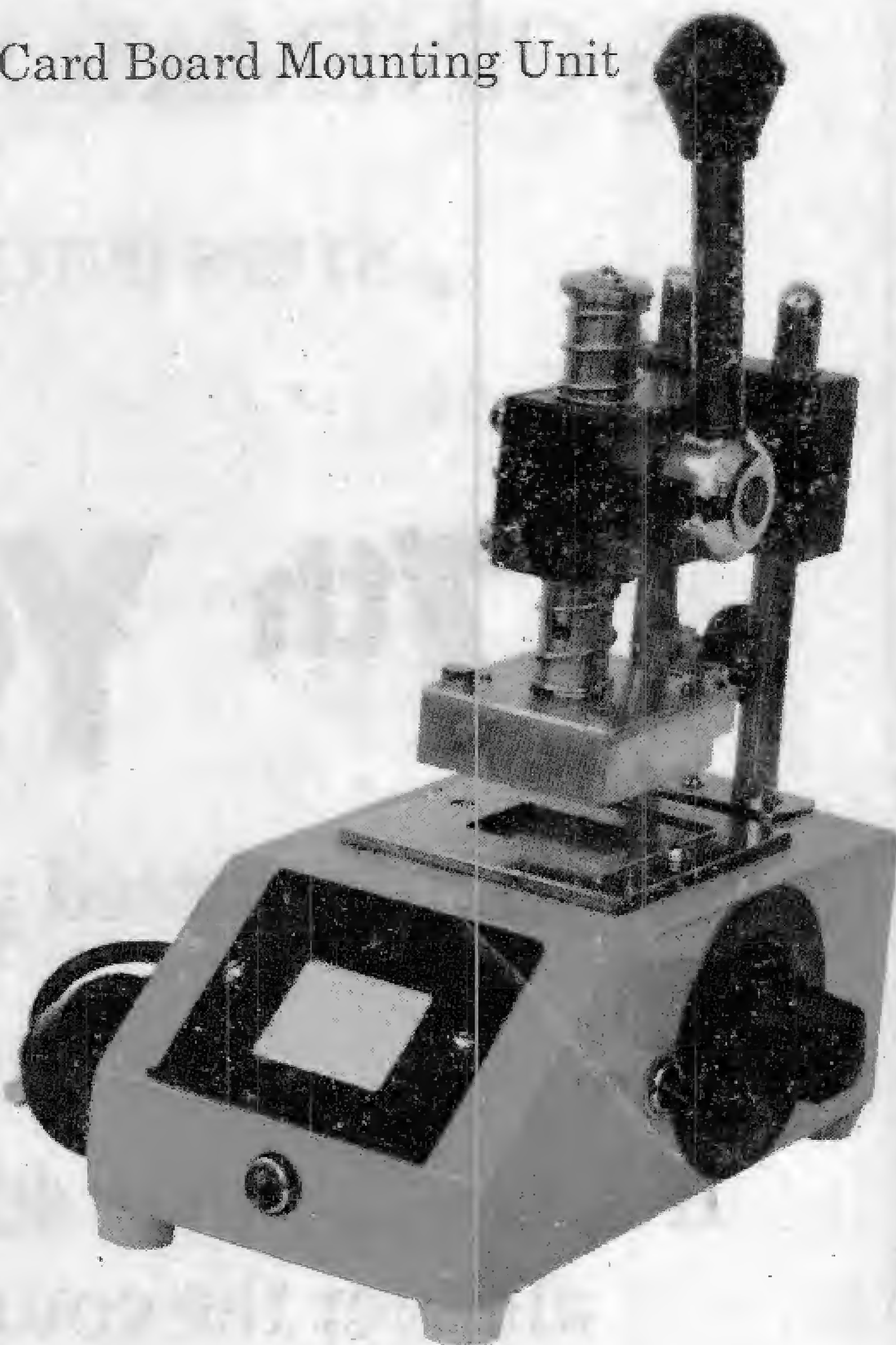


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